

THE
HERMIT OF THE NONQUON

BY

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THE HERMIT OF THE NONQUON.

I.

THE MCGLORRIES.

"GABRIELLE! Gabrielle! Look out, girl! Don't you see there? Turn the canoe into that inlet, quick, or you'll get caught in the drift of logs. Gabrielle! Can't you hear your father calling? Oh, *Gabrielle!* Bless me, there—she's caught! Heaven help—no, she just missed it!"

And the father gave a great breath of relief. Then, shading his eyes with his big rough hand to keep away the sharp rays of sunshine while he watched her landing, he continued: "There now, the little minx is laughing at me. I believe she saw the logs all the time. Oh, that girl will be the death of me yet with her pranks."

She came bounding up the bank toward him with the sprightliness of a wild deer, and threw herself laughingly into his arms. He patted her shoulder tenderly, and said:

"Why did you do it? You might know you'd frighten me."

"Maybe that's why I did it," she answered, mischievously. "Oh, father, it's such fun being out on the river." And the black eyes snapped, the white teeth gleamed, and the unruly hair tumbled about her neck and shoulders.

Their little log cabin stood near the river, on the edge of a thick wood, and as they stepped inside the door the father said to the housewife:

"Mother, this mischief has been at her tricks again. Had my heart in my mouth down there by the river just now trying to get herself caught in a drift of logs. We'll have to tie her up, mother, I think. It's the only way to keep her."

"And sure that'll not keep her," retorted the mother. "You don't know her if you think it will. She's out of all manner of reason with anything I ever saw. Sure and I don't know where she gets it."

For a mother never can understand why her daughter should develop unusual characteristics of this sort. But Gabrielle came honestly by her disposition, after all. Her mother was Irish, and a lively dame too in her day, if the truth be told; while her father—well, his birthplace was unknown and his parentage a mystery, but he could not have been mistaken in appearance for anything but a Frenchman. And his first name also smacked strongly of his nationality, but his second—well, his second was McGlorrie. Bonaventure McGlorrie—there was something grotesque in the combination; and we may as well tell how he came by such a name.

In the early days of what was then called Upper Canada there was a sparse settlement in that region which in after years, as civilization pushed itself farther north, was called "The Front." "The Front" embraced in a vague way all the territory on the shore of Lake Ontario in the vicinity of Little York (now Toronto), and running east fifty or sixty miles. About thirty miles east of Little York, on the Kingston road, an Irishman of the name of Timothy McGlorrie kept

tavern, and one evening late in the fall of 182- a strange man called at his place with a little boy, and asked for some supper. After the meal was over the stranger begged permission to leave the boy with the McGlorries while he pushed on to Little York, promising to call on his way back and get him. Mrs. McGlorrie saw how wearied the little fellow appeared, and consented to keep him. The stranger bade them "good-evening," and that was the last they ever saw of him.

When they began questioning the boy they found that he could not speak a word of English. They had no means of finding out whence he came. The little waif was completely at their mercy; but an Irish heart never was found amiss in a case of this kind. They adopted the lad, and treated him like a son. The only intelligible word connected with his former life that they ever got from him was his first name. When they called him "sonny" he shook his little curly pate quite vigorously, and retorted, "Bon'venture." When they tried to get him to tell his second name, he simply stared at them. He probably did not know that he had one. So they gave him their own name, and that is how it came to be Bonaventure McGlorrie.

The lad grew up, learned the language, married Nora McGlorrie, and finally settled about twenty-five miles north of the Kingston road, on the bank of the Non-quon River, where he followed the double pursuit of lumbering and farming. It was little of the latter he did, the former being more to his taste.

Bonaventure knew he was French; there was no mistake about that. The older he grew the more the fact impressed him, and he never lost an oppor-

tunity of stating his nationality. It came to be quite a mania with him. "I'm French, you know," he would say to every chance acquaintance. "French descent." And at these times, and also when he became angry or excited, he would unconsciously take on the French accent. He might start out by saying "French," but if he continued the subject long, or repeated the word many times, it would finally become "Franch."

He was never so happy as when he could meet a Frenchman and talk with him. "I'm Franch myself, you know," as if he were paying himself a compliment. When asked about his early life or whence he came, he would suddenly halt in the conversation, and sit awhile with his eyes turned toward the ceiling, watching the smoke curl up from his pipe, and then as suddenly break out again: "Now that's just it! My fran', I'd give this right han' o' mine if I could tell you *dat*." In these moments he was French in everything—expression, appearance, gesture, accent.

When a baby girl was born to Bonaventure and his wife he gave her a French name, and though Mrs. McGlorrie never was greatly taken with his selection, yet she was mollified by the privilege of naming the baby boy who came a few years later. She called him Dennis. So it was "Gabrielle" and "Dinnie." "And a precious pair they were," as Mrs. McGlorrie often used to remark.

II.

THE INDIAN AND THE FISH.

THE Nonquon River makes many curves and bends in the last mile or so of its course before emptying into Lake Scugog, and in the depths of one of these bends, where the willows overhang the water and deepen its color almost to a black, some nice large bass were careening past each other and frolicking together one afternoon a few weeks after Gabrielle's adventure with the logs. One could tell that they were large by seeing a sturdy member of the tribe occasionally flop his fat sides out of the water in play. The sunshine would sparkle for an instant on his shiny scales, and then he would dart back again to deep water, where he probably discussed with his fellows the advisability of taking the bait on the hook of one-eyed Andy, the Indian, who sat stolidly watching the line hanging over the side of his canoe. If the bass did discuss this question they must have decided against it, for Andy was having ill luck. And yet he sat there hour after hour patiently, lazily, looking at the line; while the sun gradually passed around to the west.

Presently he heard the sound of a paddle up the river, and in a few minutes a canoe rounded the bend, and Gabrielle sang out cheerily:

"Hello! Andy. What luck?"

The Indian simply shook his head and cast his one eye dolefully at the bottom of his empty canoe.

"Oh, you don't know how to fish, Andy," said Gabrielle, laughing. "Wait till you see me catch 'em." And she tossed her hook, baited with the leg of a frog, into the pool not far from the Indian.

"Now, Andy, let's see who'll catch the first fish." And both settled down into that ominous silence which creeps over every fisherman at the moment when he is expecting most on the part of the fish. But the fish failed to bite, and it grew tiresome to Gabrielle, who was not so patient as the Indian. She never could remain quiet for long.

"Was the lake rough when you came over from the island, Andy?"

"Not much. Left there this morning."

"Been here fishing all day?"

"Most all day."

"Andy, I think you're a fool, or else you're lazy—maybe both. I couldn't stand this an hour, let alone all day." She was growing careless in her fishing. The absorption of the first few minutes had passed away, and she was looking across the water at a flock of blackbirds that were chattering among the rushes. Presently they flew off with a whirring sound, and Gabrielle cast her eyes about for something else to interest her.

"Did you notice whether they had taken the last lot of logs away from Bascoes' landing as you came up—Hello!—hold on, Andy—keep cool, I've got him—look out or he'll get tangled in your line. Oh, he's a big one. I'm afraid he'll break my hook, Andy. Steady now. See him dart! see him plunge!" Her line was being twitched viciously here and there in the water, while her pole was bent into a semicircle. "Oh, he's a beauty

if I can only—land him—hold on now—there! Here he comes—there—now I've got him. Whew, isn't he a bouncer? See him jump! He'll get out of the canoe yet if I'm not careful. I'll hold him down, Andy, while you pull your canoe alongside and run your knife into him just back of the gills. Be careful and don't cut me; he's squirming so. There, I guess that'll settle him."

And she sank back into the canoe with a great sigh of satisfaction. Her eyes sparkled, and when she brushed back the hair which had fallen over her face in the encounter it showed her cheeks aglow from excitement.

"Oh, Andy, didn't he fight? Look at him. He must weigh eight or ten pounds." And probably he looked that to her. But Andy shook his head.

"Bass no weigh that much," he said.

"But he's a big one, isn't he?"

Andy nodded his head and stared enviously at the plump fish lying in Gabrielle's canoe. Her success had unsettled the Indian. It was well enough to sit and fish all day without any luck—he could do that with stolid indifference—but when some one else came along and caught a fish right under his nose, that was a cruel blow. And then the aborigine was hungry. He was very hungry. He had eaten nothing since early morning, before he left the island, and the sight of that fish set his stomach rumbling.

Gabrielle was quick to read the wistful look on his face.

"Tell you what I'll do, Andy. I'll give him to you if you'll bring me a pair of moccasins the next time you come over. A real nice pair, mind," as she looked

down at her prize and saw the sacrifice she was making. "Beads and all on 'em, and the best of buckskin."

"All right. Me fetch 'em." And the bass was lifted from Gabrielle's canoe into Andy's.

The Indian was too anxious to get away and cook his fish to remain any longer, and the shadows were by this time beginning to creep about the river, so that Gabrielle did not care to stay to try her luck again.

"Mind you don't forget about the moccasins, Andy," she shouted as they were paddling off in opposite directions. But Andy either did not hear her or else was too much absorbed in the prospect of his coming meal to answer. He paddled away toward the mouth of the river without a word, and was presently lost to sight at the next bend.

"Oh, mother," shouted Gabrielle a few minutes later as she burst into the open door of the cabin, "I caught a bass that long," measuring with her hands.

"Where is it?" asked her mother.

Gabrielle knew there was a storm coming, and hesitated. "Oh—I let—one-eyed Andy, the Indian, have it."

"Let him have it? What for?" turning and looking at the girl in surprise.

Gabrielle pretended to be deeply absorbed in the occupation of arranging her fish-line on the little shelf back of the stove, and rather furtively answered: "He is going to bring me a pair of moccasins the next time he comes over. Besides," she quickly added, as she saw her mother's face, "he was hungry."

"Moccasins! Hungry! The vile wretch that he is! And you're simple enough to let him wheedle you out of the fish. As if he'll ever bring you the moccasins,

the old heathen. And anyhow what can you do with moccasins? Do you want to turn yourself into a young squaw, wearing such things as them? I'm out of all manner of patience with you. First thing I know you'll be trigg'in' your brother Dinnie here up in some outlandish suit more fit for a wild man than for civilized bein's." She was always afraid Gabrielle would contaminate Dennie.

As soon as Gabrielle could make an excuse she slipped out of doors, and Dennie, who probably never had thought about moccasins till he heard his mother speak, slyly followed his sister and whispered:

"Gabe, next you catch a bass you'll get me a pair of moccasins, won't you?"

"Hush, Dennie, mother'll hear you."

"But you'll get 'em, won't you, Gabe?"

"Don't know. I'll see. You must mind what mother says."

But she showed her own mind in the matter by muttering to herself as she walked away down the path toward the stable, "I'll have them moccasins, and I'll wear 'em too; that is," she added, "if father says it's all right."

III.

THE MCFARLANES.

THE Widow McFarlane lived about half a mile north of the McGlorries, on a tract of land left by her husband, who had been killed by a falling tree shortly after they came to the Nonquon. She had a son, Donald, or, as she in her good Scotch dialect called him, "Tone-alt," and he was the apple of her eye.

"My son Tone-alt—I'm sure I canna' tell what he would be doing without me," meaning, of course, that she could not tell what she would do without her son Donald, for the good woman invariably got the "cart before the horse" whenever she essayed the English language.

Donald merited his mother's favor. He was a brawny Scotch lad, with gray full-cloth apparel, a rather heavy gait, and a big, tender heart. If he had a failing it was bashfulness. He was shy of everybody, and more particularly so of the little girl with the black eyes down by the river. As for Gabrielle's sentiments toward Donald—well, we shall see.

"Tone-alt! Tone-alt!" shouted Mrs. McFarlane one day as Donald was struggling with a plow among the roots and stumps and stones of a new clearing some distance from the house. "Tone-alt, is Towser down in the field with you? I want him here. The old black soo, she is in the garden."

"Yes, Towser is here, mother; but you'd best let me

come and drive out the sow. You know she's a stubborn brute, and I'm afraid you and the dog can't do it."

"Yes, we can. Go you on with your plooming, Tone-alt. Here, Towser! Towser! Towser! Here, Towser! sic, sic, si-boy!"

And away the faithful Towser, a peart, gamy fellow, with one ear standing straight up and the other lopping over the side of his head, started for the garden.

And now began a chase which was to become memorable in the history of Mrs. McFarlane. The sow was a long-nosed brute, with a vicious little eye, and a bristling disposition to oppose everything human. Mrs. McFarlane pointed out to Towser the hole in the fence where the sow had entered, and the sagacious dog headed the animal in that direction. Away they went like the wind, the sow evidently realizing that there was a scrimmage in store for her, and willing to enter heartily into the spirit of the thing.

"Si—b-o-y! Si—b-o-y! Sic, sic, si—b-o-y!" shouted Mrs. McFarlane, clapping her hands to urge on the dog. She consoled herself for the way they were tearing up the newly planted garden-beds by seeing the rapid progress they were making toward the hole. But alas for human hopes where there is a black sow in the question. Mrs. McFarlane was dumfounded to see the animal shoot past the hole in the fence and scamper away up the other side of the garden, digging up the black, moist earth with her feet, and scattering destruction among the seeds and plants. Towser mistook his mistress' wild gesticulations for a vigorous encouragement to follow up the chase, and accordingly yelped and barked after the flying sow as if his life

depended on it. Before Mrs. McFarlane—who struck out across the garden to intercept them, holding her impeding skirts up in front of her with one hand and viciously waving the other in the air in tune with her imprecations—before she could head them off, they had made the circuit of the garden and were flying past the hole a second time. This was maddening to the old woman, who saw that every jump of the sow meant so much ruin to her garden. She stood still a moment, with hands on her hips and nearly out of breath, but using what little she had in heaping maledictions on both sow and dog. If her terrible tirade—some English, some Scotch, and the rest a confused medley between the two—were possible of presentation with the pen it would give us pleasure to record it; but we retreat from the attempt in despair. Her head was covered with a red kerchief tied in the prevailing fashion of pioneer farm-women, and the loose ends were blown by the breeze in concert with the tempest of her tongue. Soon she ceased her shrill screaming and, struck with a new determination, started toward the hole in the fence, muttering to herself and shaking her head in a way that boded not well for the sow, provided Mrs. McFarlane's project turned not amiss.

She planted herself sternly on the far side of the hole, near the fence, in the exact tracks made by the sow, determined to head her off at whatever cost. The animals were tearing down in her direction, and she grimly chuckled to herself at the thought of the sow's disappointment when she found herself checked at last.

"I will be breaking her nose, the old *hussy*, if she will not stop."

As the sow neared the hole, Mrs. McFarlane began a vigorous waving of the hands and a loud shouting.

"Si—b-o-y! Si—b-o-y! Oh, you old *hussy*! I'll have you to know—"

But alas, and alas, we are never to learn what Mrs. McFarlane would have the old sow to know. Driven to a blind desperation by the long chase, the animal bore down on the good woman without the slightest deviation to the right or left, and with a dogged desire to follow in her old tracks, she rushed between Mrs. McFarlane's feet. She was going at a terrific pace, and her long snout caught in the stout flannel skirts and brought the good dame pell-mell face down on the old sow's back. Being a lusty brute, she bore up bravely under Mrs. McFarlane's weight, for the Scotch woman was mostly skin and bone, with little flesh. And then began a furious struggle. The sow, blinded by rage and by Mrs. McFarlane's skirts, tore madly about, emitting the while a variety of the most unearthly squeals that ever came from even an old black sow. Mrs. McFarlane, no less enraged than the sow at finding herself in this predicament, seized with one hand the curly tail which was waving perilously close to her face, and with the other belabored the muddy hams of her enemy. To make matters worse, Towser, who had now gained on the struggling sow, mistook the fluttering end of Mrs. McFarlane's kerchief for the sow's tail, perhaps, and seizing hold, tugged away with such might and main that it drove the good woman well-nigh distracted. And thus Mrs. McFarlane worried the sow, and both the sow and dog worried Mrs. McFarlane; till at last, the sow giving out under her burden, they all fell in an inglorious heap in the midst of a soft black

bed of onion-seed. We must here, in consideration of Mrs. McFarlane, draw the curtain, with the sufficient assurance that a vigorous application of her boot-heels on the old sow's hide eventually brought her release.

Donald, hearing such a prodigious squealing, and guessing at something of the truth, came up to put out the sow, and the perversity of the breed was never shown to better advantage than by the old tyrant walking straight to the hole and crowding her reeking body through. She had evidently known where the hole was all the while, and now, content with the mischief she had done, was willing to go out.

Mrs. McFarlane rose from the onion-bed and stood besmeared with mud, even to a great daub on the side of her face. She was bedraggled, and bruised, and out of breath, but her eye lost none of its vim, and her voice none of its vigor, as she pointed a trembling, bony finger in the direction of the sow and said:

"Tone-alt, the old soo, she will be kilt on the morrow. Go you and tell Mr. McGlorrie. He will help you kill her. The old *hussy!*"

But Donald simply smiled, with a sly twinkle in his eye, and he did not go for Mr. McGlorrie. Well he knew that, so far as his mother was concerned, the old sow would live for many a day to bless her age and generation. And so she did.

IV.

THE VILLAGERS.

THE Nonquon village lay a short distance up the river from the McGlorries, and contained as unique a set of characters as ever got together in a place of its size. Gabrielle was always sure of a tilt with some of them whenever she entered the place, for she was a quick-tongued girl and full of fun. Her especial victim was an individual who went by the name of Brown, "B'gob-sir" Brown, as he was called. He was an inoffensive, boastful old fellow, who had dropped into the village tavern one day, and had been hanging around there ever since, doing odd chores for his living—and liquor. No one knew what his real name was. On his first arrival in the place, as he stepped into the bar-room and called for a drink in his pompous way, Jerry, the tavern-keeper, asked him his name.

"Why, b'gob-sir, you kin call me Brown if you like." And Brown it was till one day Gabrielle's quick wit seized on his favorite by-word and christened him B'gob-sir. Ever since that he had been called "Old B'gob-sir" oftener than anything else.

"Now, Gabe, what the dickens you doin' down here so early in the day?" he called to Gabrielle one morning as she came into the village.

"You 'tend to your business and I'll 'tend to mine," was the laconic reply as she was turning toward the store.

"Oh, I know what's the matter with you, Gabe; you're goin' over to see old Prosper and make eyes at him. Them big black eyes o' yours 'll get you into trouble some day. Prosper ain't no spring chicken, let me tell you, and his wife is alive and well."

The individual referred to was the village store-keeper. Besides that, he was the local preacher, class-leader, and Sunday-school superintendent. This was on Sunday. On Monday morning he traded horses, and did it with all the due accompaniments of the business.

Gabrielle had little respect for any of the villagers, but she had less for Prosper Tryne than any one else. She hated him. B'gob-sir knew this, and chuckled at his own remark. "Look at your eyes now," he added; "they're dancin' already."

They were dancing somewhat, but with a light in them that boded not well for B'gob-sir.

"Speakin' of eyes," she said, "do you know I've often wondered what color yours was."

B'gob-sir was thrown completely off his guard. He was flattered.

"Mine? Why, what difference does that make?"—grinning in a foolish way. "Shouldn't make no diff'rence with an old feller like me, should it? Now, Gabe, why don't you look for yourself and see what color they be, if you want to know so bad?"

"Can't do it."

"Can't do it? What do you mean?"

"Can't see 'em."

"Now, Gabe, what the dickens you gittin' at? Why can't you see 'em?"

"'Cause I can't."

"Well, but—now what in the name o' snakes—why, what's to hender you from seein' 'em?"

"Your nose."

"*What?*"

"Your nose. Say, have you ever thought what a well-balanced man you are, B'gob-sir? Your nose is about the size of your feet, and your feet are about the size of all out doors."

B'gob-sir was staring at her and catching for breath.

"And that ain't all," she rattled on. "Your nose and your boots match in other ways as well as in size. They're both red. Look at 'em and see! You've used too much whisky and too little tallow for the good of 'em both. You'd best stop paintin' your nose with liquor and spend more of your time in greasin' your boots with tallow. Good-by. See you later." And she was away before he could muster a reply.

"That girl has got the all-firedest sharpest tongue in her head I ever heard tell of," he muttered to himself as he went pottering back into the bar-room.

Prosper smiled at her from behind the counter as she entered the store door, and broke out: "Well, if that ain't strange! I've been thinkin' about you all the mornin'. Have jest been a-wonderin' if we couldn't git you to come and sing in the church. We're talkin' of gittin' up a choir, and I believe if you'd join all the rest would, and we'd have a real rousin' choir. What think you?"

Gabrielle shook her head, and began to examine some rope for a clothes-line. "I can't sing," she answered, in an evasive way. "How much is this clothes-line?"

"Oh, tut now, I've heard you sing often enough. I

could tell your voice above all the others the night of the sleigh-ride party last winter, when you drove through the village. But I couldn't help a-thinkin'," he added, with a pious tone creeping into the words, "that it was carryin' the thing a little too far for you young folks to be out so late on a Saturday night singin' that kind of a song. It must 'a' been nigh Sunday when you drove through here, and 'We won't go home till morning' ain't a very nice song for Sunday."

"How did you come to be up at that time o' night?" she asked, with a curl of her lip.

"Oh, preparin' my Sunday-school lesson. I always go over that the last thing Saturday night, and sometimes it keeps me up late."

"Do you prepare your Sunday-school lesson out in the stable?" He looked at her with a start, but she continued, "And do you go over it with a sharp file? And do you learn it by looking into your horse's mouth, and rasping down his front teeth to make him look younger, so he'll trade better Monday morning?"

"Why, Gabrielle, what do you mean?"

"Oh, you'd better shut the stable door next time, and not hang the lantern so high. But you haven't told me yet how much this clothes-line is."

He was glad to change the subject.

"The price is 25 cents, but I'll let you have it for 20, and cheap, I can tell you. Them lines cost me —"

"Here's your money," interposed Gabrielle, and started for the door.

"But ain't you goin' to let me have your name for the choir?" he asked, as she was leaving.

"No; I told you I didn't want to."

"Oh, I guess I can see the reason you act this way."

You used to like to come to our church all right enough, but by the way things looks now I'm afraid the Presbyterians 'll git you before long. You'll be goin' to their church up in the Scotch settlement perty soon if what folks says is true. They say that you and Donald McFarlane is—"

But she slammed the door and was gone.

"That Gabrielle McGlorrie is an impertinent little minx," Prosper remarked to his wife as she came into the store a few minutes later. The wife had come to tell him that she was out of stove-wood, and she did not propose to split any more herself while he was hanging around in the store doing nothing.

"You can either go without your dinner or else split me some wood," she had said.

"Ain't there any chips you can pick up around?" he ventured.

"No," answered the neglected wife. "I've been pickin' up chips till there ain't any more to pick, and I've split my own wood till my hands are all blistered, and I ain't going to do it any longer. If you can't split wood you can't eat, that's all."

"All right, I'll go out and split some in a minute," he was forced to say. And then he ventured the afore-said remark about Gabrielle's impertinence.

"Well, I'll warrant you said something to make her impertinent," his wife retorted. "I never heard any of her impertinence, and I guess you wouldn't if you'd leave her alone. The trouble with you is that she's got too sharp a tongue for you, and she knows enough to use it too when either you or old B'gob-sir try to tease her. I'm glad she can take her own part. Come now, I'll tend the store while you go out and split that wood."

Prosper shuffled out into the yard, and looked around for some easy sticks to split, but he could not find any. His wife, poor soul, had picked out the easy ones long ago.

Mrs. Tryne had not been in possession of the store long when a small thin man, with a peaceful expression of countenance, entered.

"Hello, Mrs. Tryne," he said, "you keepin' store all alone to-day? Where's Prosper?"

"He's out splittin' up some wood. You're quite a stranger, Philander; we don't see no more of you 'n 's if you lived a mile away. Why ain't you more neighborly?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I'm perty busy these days. Been so all spring. First of all it kep' me goin' lookin' after my mushrat traps, and when I got them all took up then my gardenin' begun, and it seems 's if the weeds wasn't goin' to give a man a might o' peace all this summer."

"How does your garden look?"

"Oh, tol'ble well, considerin' the dry spell. But I believe we're goin' to have rain by the way the sky looks. I can almost smell it in the air," he added, going to the door and looking at the clouds.

Philander Hunt was a bachelor who lived alone in a small shanty across-lots from the Trynes. He made his living by shooting, trapping, fishing, and gardening, and was one of the few villagers with whom Gabrielle got on well. To be sure he took her to task for "breakin' the hearts of all the young fellers round the Nonquon," and she in turn teased him about the Widow Farley, who lived next door to the Trynes, and who had a constant eye on the bachelor. But they understood each other and were the best of friends.

"You can't tell me anything mean about Gabe," he would say to a chance group of villagers who might be discussing Gabrielle, which they often did. "You can't show me where she ever done a mean trick in her life. She's wild sometimes, mebbe, and so is a young fawn, but I never heard tell that anybody thought the less of a fawn for being a little wild. One thing I want to say, she ain't no wolf in the skin of a sheep, like some folks I know." Which probably had reference to his neighbor the store-keeper, and possibly accounted as much as anything for the fact that he had been "quite a stranger" to the Trynes.

As for Gabrielle, her opinion of Philander was summed up briefly in this wise: "He's the best one of the whole lot, and he's going to take me with him on one of his trips over to the ma'sh creek this fall when he goes to look after his traps."

V.

THE WILD MAN.

ONE evening in the early part of June, when the soft, sweet fragrance of summer had begun to permeate the woods and fields, Bonaventure sat in front of his cabin smoking his pipe. The air was mellow after a day of warm sunshine. The tree-toads down in the swamp screeched an accompaniment to the shrill song of the whip-poor-will, and the crickets chirped here and there among the growing grass. Once in a while a venturesome mosquito dared the tobacco-smoke, and sang about Bonaventure's ears or lit on the back of his hand. A lone cow bawled in the distance, and the dull rumble of a heavy wagon creeping slowly—so slowly that it was probably drawn by a yoke of plodding oxen—over the hill to the north jarred upon the quiet air. Some fowls, roosting in the low branches of a clump of evergreens down by the stable, now and then broke out into plaintive mutterings when disturbed by the crowding of their fellows, and a couple of pigs grunted and snored contentedly in a corner of the zigzag rail fence.

Presently Bonaventure heard footsteps coming down the path from the road, with voices accompanying, and in a few minutes the immense frame of old B'gob-sir hove in sight, followed by Philander and Donald McFarlane. Donald's mother had sent him down to see if he could borrow Mr. McGlorrie's potash ket-

tle; and it may be remarked in passing that this kettle was the bane of Donald's life. His mother seemingly had more uses for a potash kettle than any one else ever heard tell of, and not being prosperous enough to own one herself, she was perpetually importuning Donald in this wise: "Go you down, Tone-alt, and borrow Mr. McGlorrie's kettle. I will be making soap on the morrow."

While Donald was for some reasons not loath to visit the McGlorries, yet this incessant application for the kettle was becoming a sore trial to him. He was wondering all the while what opinion the McGlorries would have of a young man who was always running after a potash kettle. To-night he had met B'gob-sir and Philander as they were turning into Bonaventure's, and was glad of their company. He could face Mr. McGlorrie with less stammering when they were present, and he thought he could face a certain other person with less palpitation of the heart.

"Good-evening, gentlemen," cheerily said Bonaventure. "Come in. Come right inside and sit down," he added, rising to go indoors.

"No, no," remonstrated B'gob-sir. "Keep your seat. I'd ruther sit out-doors any time than go inside such a night as this."

"Yes," said Philander, "we'll sit down out here, where we can hear the frogs booming down in the river."

Donald said nothing.

"Here, Gabrielle," called Bonaventure, "bring out some chairs."

Gabrielle rushed to the open door of the cabin, singing out in her lively way: "Hello! B'gob-sir. Hello! Philan—"

But just here she checked herself, and her jauntiness fell like the spirit of a sensitive-plant touched with a sudden dash of cold water. She had noticed a third party, and seen who he was, and she quickly turned and went for the chairs. She brought out two and handed them to B'gob-sir and Philander, and then stood leaning in a constrained manner against the doorcase, trying to look unconscious.

"Gabrielle, girl, what are you thinking of?" said her father. "Why don't you bring out one for Donald?"

Had it been daylight, Philander, who was looking curiously at her, would have seen her face painfully flush as she turned slowly away to get the chair. She passed the chair to B'gob-sir, who in turn passed it to Philander, and he to Donald. The seat somehow did not seem comfortable to Donald, and Gabrielle, not deigning to get one for herself, sank quietly down on the doorstep between her father and B'gob-sir, where she was hidden from view.

"Well, what do you think," said the old fellow with the big nose and feet, addressing Bonaventure, "Philander has jest been fillin' me full again about that wild man he seen over in the ma'sh this spring. That's about the fishiest thing Philander ever told, and I'm kinder surprised at him fixin' up such a story as that."

"That story ain't fixed up, I want you to understand," retorted Philander with some significance. "I don't know whether you'd call it a wild man or what you'd call it, but I seen something the likes o' what I'd never seen before, and hope to never see again."

Bonaventure was much impressed with Philander's evident earnestness. He had heard vague rumors of something having been seen by hunters over in the

large tract of dense forest called the marsh, but had paid little heed to them till now. He knew, however, that Philander was no sensationalist, and hitching his chair around to face him, asked what he had seen.

"I don't like to say much about the thing," said Philander with some diffidence, "because nobody ain't goin' to believe what I say till they see it for themselves; and I hope to gracious no one'll ever see it."

Here B'gob-sir broke out into a derisive laugh, and loftily requested to be taken to the spot at once. "B'gob-sir, I'd like to see the thing that would make a coward of me. I'm goin' to ferret this thing out some day." He made the "some day" sound conveniently vague and distant, as he sat comfortably back in his chair in front of Bonaventure's cabin in the safety of companionship.

"Well, tell us about it," persisted Bonaventure, ignoring the boastful figure at his side.

"If none of you'll say anything about it on the outside, I'll tell you the whole thing," said Philander, after a slight pause; and then proceeded:

"You know the Nonquon River takes a big turn, so that if you start up-stream from the village you go west a mile or two, and then a branch winds around to the north, and finally northeast. If you want to strike the stream up near its head, where it's called Fraser's Creek, you take a short cut a couple of miles north of here, and then strike in due nor'west for about the same distance. That is, you'd reach it if you follered the line, but I never knew any one yet that could foller it. It's the roughest piece o' country over around that way that ever lay out-doors. And the fact is that it was in the edge of that rough bit of land that I seen this—this

thing. I don't mind tellin' you folks that it wasn't so far away as the ma'sh, though I let people believe it was. If I told 'em that this thing was over near Fraser's Creek, only four or five miles from where we sit now, they'd laugh at me, same's B'gob-sir done a minute ago. But it's there, whatever it is," he added, with conviction.

"How'd you come to see it?" asked Bonaventure.

"Well, I was follerin' a wolf-track up along the edge of the creek one afternoon with old Sancho; and I want to say right here that he is the best dog that ever put his nose to the ground, even if he did git scared this time. We had worked along up about as far as it seemed possible to go, and the ground was rougher at every step. I didn't see how even an animal could git through it. The banks was steep in most places, and a few feet in from the shore it was out of the question tryin' to move at all. Sancho was on ahead, smashin' through the brush and sniffin' about, when all at once I heard him give a yelp, and the next minute he come scurryin' back to where I was, with his tail atween his legs and his hair standin' up on end, the worst scared animal you ever seen. He whined and growled, and went on at an awful rate, and one minute he'd rush into the brush ahead, and then he'd come boundin' back again more excited than ever. I couldn't make out what in the light o' the sun ailed him, for I never seen that dog scared before. I knowed well enough it wasn't the wolf he'd seen, because he'd tackle a wolf quicker'n a wink, any day; and so I follered after him, with a perty tight hold o' my gun, and my front finger foolin' 'round mighty close to the trigger, I can tell you. I pushed through the bushes, and soon came to a

spot that was a little more open and clear than the rest, but I couldn't see anything, and was jest goin' to call Sancho an old fool, when I noticed him sniffin' around in the snow, as if he was follerin' some kind of a track. I went up to where he was, and sure enough there was the track, but whatever in the name of conscience made it I couldn't tell. It wasn't like anything I had ever seen before, and it was too outlandish big for any kind of an animal to make. It hadn't much shape to it, but looked more like a man's track than anything else, and yet it didn't look like a man's either. I didn't know what to make of it, but thought I'd foller it up a ways, and see what become of it. I kept gropin' around after it in and out among the bushes, and while I was doin' so I remembered about Barlow Dreeme tellin' me that he had seen some queer-lookin' tracks something like these over in the piece of ma'sh that runs up this way. They was tracks like what might be made by a man's foot if it hadn't any boots on, but was all wrapped up in some kind o' cloth or other. Well, I follered 'em up till I got tired, and the place was so rough I called Sancho back and started for home. I hadn't gone far before I come plump onto the wolf whose track I had seen by the creek comin' up. I had missed him in lookin' for the strange tracks, and we neither of us seen each other till I was within a couple o' rods of him. He stood there lookin' at me kinder startled for a minute, as an animal will sometimes, and it give me a good chance to shoot him. I brought him first clip. He jest made one jump into the air, and let a snarl out of him, and then fell flat as a flounder. But what to do with him was the next question. It was gettin' too late to stay and skin him, and I was too tired to lug his

carcass home, so I strung him up to the limb of a tree, and trusted to luck to leave him there till mornin'.

"I went back the next day to git him, but he was gone. I looked around and seen where the carcass had been dragged through the snow, and in follerin' it up a ways I could see every now and then this same queer track beside the trail, showin' that my wolf had been carried away by the same thing that had scared Sancho the day before. I want to say that my mind hadn't been off'n them tracks much o' the time sence I had first seen 'em, and now I was bound to foller 'em up and find out something about 'em. The sun was shinin' bright as a new dollar, and it had snowed jest enough through the night to make the tracks fresh. Sancho was snortin' around, with his big ears floppin' at the side of his head, and his tail standin' straight up, as if he was ready for any kind o' work. So I put him onto the trail, and away we went, Sancho ahead. It wasn't long before the very same thing happened that did the day before. Sancho came boundin' back to where I was, frightened out of his wits. He whined, and shook, and crouched down behind my legs, till I was jest betwixt gittin' mad at the dog and gittin' scared myself. But I was bound to see what it all meant, and so I pushed on ahead, though I couldn't make the dog go two feet in front of me. He stuck right to my heels, and when I tried to make him go on he whined, and set down on his haunches, and held up one of his front feet so pitiful that I let him foller."

"Well, you was a perty pair, I must say," broke in B'gob-sir, who felt that Philander was absorbing the attention of the little group around him—Mrs. McGlorrie was standing in the doorway listening with the rest

—to an extent altogether unwarranted by his importance in the community. "I guess the dog's master was jest as frightened as the dog, if the truth was known."

"B'gob-sir, you keep still," whispered Gabrielle, plucking his sleeve, "or I'll tell about the time I put the dead rat in your coat pocket."

B'gob-sir subsided.

"I don't mind admittin' that I was some scared," Philander went on, "but if I was scared then, I was a blamed sight more scared a little later on. I heard the brush crack in front o' me, and Sancho growled and kinder hung back, but come on again when I spoke to him; and in a few minutes I caught sight o' something through the bushes, but couldn't see enough of it to tell what it was like. It was skippin' here and there quicker'n a flash, and however it managed to haul the dead wolf around over the logs and through the brush so fast was more'n I could tell. I seen I wasn't goin' to overtake it very easy by follerin' its track, so I cut out around to head it off, and made a wide half-circle about the brow of a little hill, till I come to a partly open space that sloped down to the creek. I waited in the edge of this for a spell to see if it wouldn't cross the space, but began to think I had miscalc'lated, and was jest steppin' from behind the bushes, when I saw something that made my blood run colder'n I ever want to feel it again. I didn't blame the dog a mite for bein' scared. And jest here I want to say to you," said Philander, impressively, after a slight pause, during which he was watched with breathless attention, "I want to say that I can't tell you what it was I saw. Can't describe it to save my life. It was about the color o' the wolf it was jerkin' along after it, but was more like

the shape of a man. But sech a *lookin'* creetur! All hair except jest its two eyes; and the *kind* of eyes you never saw. Wild and piercin' as two coals of fire, and big as tea-sassers. It stood starin' at me jest a second, and then it dropped the wolf and darted into the thick brush, makin' a queer kind o' noise, and that was the last I seen of it."

"Did you pick up your wolf?" asked B'gob-sir.

"No-siree; never went near it. I got out of that locality about as quick as my legs would carry me. And I've never been there sence—at least not so far up as I went that day. But I can't get that thing off my mind, and some day I'm goin' to search it out. But I ain't goin' alone," he added, as he thought of his former experience.

"Oh, I'll go up there with you," loftily exclaimed B'gob-sir. "I'll go and see what the dickens this is you're makin' so much fuss about. Why, b'gob-sir, if you was a drinkin' man, Philander, I'd think you'd been tryin' some o' Jerry's whisky the day you went up Fraser's Creek, and it had give you the jim-jams. That last lot o' whisky Jerry got in is enough to give a man the jim-jams at the distance of fourteen ord'nary townships."

"All the worse to paint with," whispered Gabrielle, somewhat viciously. "You'd better stick to the tallow."

Bonaventure seemed strangely impressed with Philander's story. His pipe had gone out during its recital, and he sat leaning forward with elbows on his knees, holding the pipe by its stem with the bowl upside down.

"No," he said to Philander, after a pause, wholly

ignoring B'gob-sir's observation, "I shouldn't go alone after what you saw, but then it is not right to let the matter rest where it is. Something should be done. We'll make up a party some of these days and search the woods. Strange, very strange," he added, half to himself, as his mind ran back over Philander's experience.

"'Deed now, and I don't want you to go traipsin' off into that turrible place lookin' for wild men," said Mrs. McGlorrie, with a wifely solicitation for her husband's safety. "No tellin' anything about what a hathenish thing it might be. Now, Gabrielle, it's time you was in bed, girl. Dinnie's been there this long while, and he's all the better for it."

The propriety of sending Gabrielle to bed was suggested by the close attention which that young lady had been paying to Philander while he spoke. She listened with breathless interest to every word, and her mother did not fancy the excited look in her eye as he finished.

"I wish you'd get me a drink of water, Gabrielle, before you go," said her father. She fetched some in a big tin dipper, and after he had drank she turned to Philander and asked if he would have some.

"Perty warm to-night; don't care if I do," said Philander.

She brought him some, and stood patting the soft earth with one foot and looking abstractedly toward the village while he drank.

"And you, B'gob-sir?" she asked, as Philander handed her the dipper. B'gob-sir declined, and she took the dipper into the house. She did not ask Donald if he would have some.

As the men rose to go, Gabrielle managed to get Philander's ear, while her father was saying something to Donald about the prospect of the crops.

"You'll take me with you some day up Fraser's Creek, won't you?"

"I thought it was up the ma'sh creek you wanted to go."

"No, I don't care about that; I'd rather see what Fraser's Creek is like. You'll take me sometime, Philander, won't you?"

"Don't know; I'll see about that. You haven't any idea what kind of a place it is, or you wouldn't want to go."

"Oh yes, I would. That's the *reason* I want to go. I—" But any further remark was cut short by B'gob-sir, who spluttered around about the difficulty of getting Philander home in "any kind o' decent time o' night. Why, b'gob-sir, the man would talk all night if I'd let him." Which remark sounded peculiarly ludicrous in view of B'gob-sir's natural propensity for talk and Philander's well-known reserve.

"Good-night, Philander," said Gabrielle. "Good-night, B'gob-sir." But she did not say "Good-night, Donald."

When Mrs. McFarlane learned the next morning that Donald had failed to mention the subject of the potash kettle during his visit to the McGlorries, she stared at him in utter astonishment for a moment, and then shook her head disapprovingly, and muttered something to herself in a way that made Donald feel very uneasy.

"I will go myself," she said. "I will go after I eat my parritch."

And she did. Her long vigorous strides up the road indicated a determination to read Donald a lesson on his negligence in not asking for the kettle, for it was her philosophy that whatever belonged to the neighbors was equally hers by right—at least to the extent of their patience in lending. She was always studying some new subterfuge to borrow, and was impatient because Donald did not enter into the spirit of her plans.

She found no one at home in the McGlorrie household except Gabrielle, and on making known her wants to that young lady she met with a flat refusal.

"No, you can't have it," said Gabrielle, with cruel bluntness. "You're always running after that kettle, and I guess we want to use it some of the time ourselves." She spoke almost spitefully, and seemed to take a malicious delight in the effect her words had on the old Scotch woman. The good lady stood amazed for an instant at such a reception, and then began to swell with a righteous indignation.

"Humph!" she ejaculated; and seeing Gabrielle going on with her work, apparently oblivious to her presence, she grew more and more enraged at the slight put upon her, and rising to her tallest height and trembling in every fiber, she pointed a bony finger at Gabrielle and burst out:

"Weel, ef my son Tone-alt will only speer Goad Almicghty for another 'ear, we'll have a kettash poh-tal of ower ain." And forthwith she turned and strode in high dudgeon toward the road. All the way up the path she was shaking her head very vigorously, and muttering to herself, with an occasional outburst louder than the rest: "The little *hus-sy*," "I'll have

her to know," "She will be insult-ing me, the little good-for-nothing," "Humph!" "My son Tone-alt, I shall naver—"

But just at this point she felt her arm touched, and there stood Gabrielle with the sweetest, mellowest expression of countenance ever seen; her great black eyes looking up into the old woman's face, and an altogether different light in them. In a voice soft as a summer's breeze, she said:

"I didn't mean it. You may have the kettle whenever you want it, Mrs. McFarlane. You may come and get it without asking for it. Jest take it any time, no matter where you find it, and you're always welcome to it. I mean every word I say," she added, quickly, as she saw the look on the old woman's face. And then clasping Mrs. McFarlane's thin arm between her two plump and shapely hands in a caressing way, she reiterated: "Now remember, don't bother about ask-in' for it, but use it whenever you like. Good-by." And she was skipping down the path like a young deer before Mrs. McFarlane could regain her breath.

"Well, dear me, dear me," said the good dame, turning toward home. "Bless me, I don't unnerstand her at all, at all. She's naver twice the same. Sometimes she's *con-trary* as the old black soo, and then again she's good; she's good—almost—as my son Tone-alt."

VI.

A BIG CATCH.

IT had been some weeks since Gabrielle caught the bass and gave it to Andy, the Indian, and yet she had seen nothing of him, and had received no word of the promised moccasins. She watched the river closely for his canoe, but he avoided this route on his way to the village, and she was beginning to wonder how she should find him. One afternoon she saw Philander rowing down-stream, and, running to the bank, she hailed him and asked where he was going.

"Jest down to the mouth to troll for 'lunge. Won't you go along?"

"Course I will," said Gabrielle, glad of the opportunity. "You'll let me troll, won't you, Philander? I'd give anything to catch a 'lunge." Her eyes sparkled already in anticipation of the sport.

"Yes, you can troll, but mind, you must do as I say if you get one on. Don't be in too big a hurry to land him. Did you ever troll for 'lunge?"

"No, father never'll take me with him trollin'. He says I can still-fish for bass all I like, but when it comes to trollin' he ain't going to scare all the fish out of the lake by totin' such a chatter-box as me around over the water. Wish I was in his place for awhile, and him in mine; d'you know what I'd do?"

"I s'pose you'd lock him up in the woodshed a whole day."

"No I wouldn't," she said, with a softened light in her eye. "I'd take him out trollin' whenever he wanted to go, and let him chatter all he liked."

"Oh, Gabe, you're a minx. Well, we'll see what kind of a fist you make at trollin', and if you catch a big one you can take it home and make your father a present of it."

"I caught a big bass right over in that bend this spring," she said, pointing across to the spot where she and Andy had fished, "and I wish I'd given that to father."

"What did you do with it?"

"Oh, I give it to one-eyed Andy, the Indian." And then she related in detail the circumstance.

"Well, Gabe, I'm sorry," said Philander, when she had finished. "You'll never git them moccasins in the world. Old Andy's too lazy to breathe good and natural, let alone making moccasins. He'll slink out of it somehow."

"Will he?" exclaimed Gabrielle, with a dangerous glitter in her eyes. "You just wait and see!"

And then she sat quietly pondering for a time, while Philander's sweeping strokes brought the boat near to the mouth of the river.

"Now, Gabe, we're coming into deep water. You'd best let out your line; but let it out slow, and be sure the hook plays all right. If it stops playin' you must pull in and see what's wrong. It's n'ble to git caught in a weed or something like that, and if it doesn't play the fish won't bite it."

"How am I to know whether it's playin' or not?" asked Gabrielle.

"Oh, you'll feel a sort of twitchin' or quiverin' in the

line if the hook plays. When the line doesn't kinder tremble between your thumb and finger, you may know that something's wrong."

"I believe I've got one on already," exclaimed Gabrielle, commencing to haul in the few feet of line she had let out.

"No, you haven't," said Philander, laughing. "Let out your line."

"How'm I goin' to know when I have a bite?" she asked, with growing excitement.

"You'll know all right," he answered, significantly. "You'll feel a tug at the line, and then most likely it'll slack right up. When it slacks like that after a tug you must haul in fast as you can; but the minute the fish begins to pull again you must ease up on the line and humor him. Jest keep workin' him carefully up to the boat, and—but I'll tell you how to handle him when you git one on."

Philander kept the boat moving to and fro across deep places in the lake near the mouth of the river, and Gabrielle's tongue seemed to justify her father's predictions; but in extenuation it must be admitted that most of her talk ran on the work in hand.

"Philander, I don't believe it's playin'," rather excitedly.

"Well, hold the line away out from the boat between your thumb and finger, and then sec."

"Oh, yes; it's workin' all right." And then a pause. "Oh, I've got a bite! I've got a bite!" And instantly she begins to haul in.

"Sure you got a bite?" asks Philander.

"Oh, yes, I know it; I feel it tug. And the line pulls heavy now."

"All right; haul it in."

She worked away at the line, hand over hand, in growing excitement.

"I believe it's a big one, Philander. What'll I do with him when I git him up to the boat?"

"Wait till you git him up," said Philander, who was watching the line with a calmness that surprised Gabrielle.

"Gracious! he ought to be here soon," she said, looking at the pile of line in front of her.

"Guess he will," Philander remarked, with a twinkle in his eye.

The next instant there was a "swish" on the surface of the water behind the boat, and a large mass of weeds was dragged up alongside. Gabrielle's vision of a beautiful muscallonge on the hook vanished in an instant.

"Better luck next time, Gabe. Pick off the weeds and throw out the line again. You're not the first one that's been fooled that way with weeds."

"I wish the weeds were in the bottom of the —"

"Well, that's jest where they are," laughed Philander, seeing Gabrielle's mistake. "That's the trouble with 'em. If they was anywhere else than in the bottom of the lake it'd be easier fishin'."

The line was no sooner out again than Gabrielle felt an unmistakable bite.

"Oh, Philander, I've got one! There's something alive on the end of the line this time, sure. See him jerk!" And she began hauling in with might and main.

"Not too fast, Gabe! Not too fast."

But Gabrielle was oblivious to everything except that live wriggling thing on the hook.

"Look out, Gabe! You're hauling in too fast."

Just at that moment a muscallonge flopped out of the lake about twenty yards behind the boat, and Gabrielle's line hung limp and free in the water.

"Oh, he's gone!" she said, dolefully. "How did he git off the hook, I wonder?"

"You pulled him up to the surface, and that give him a chance to flop out of the water and throw the hook from his mouth. I told you not to pull so fast."

"I didn't hear you," she said, looking ruefully at the spot where the fish had escaped.

"Try again," said Philander, encouragingly, "and don't forgot to humor your fish somewhat. If he pulls real hard give him a little line, and when he runs toward the boat haul in the slack fast. Jest keep the line taut. If you leave it too loose it gives him a chance to wiggle the hook out of his mouth, and if you pull too hard he'll come to the top of the water and jump, like this one did."

"I believe I'll let you pull in the next one," she said, much depressed at her loss, and evidently despairing of her own ability.

"No you won't. You'll catch him yourself. You can troll as well's anybody, when you once git the hang of it."

Just as she was letting out the line again Philander heard the sound of a paddle, and looking across the water, observed:

"There's old Andy now. He's trollin' too. I wonder if he's got any fish."

"I wish you'd row over in his direction jest a minute," said Gabrielle, looking at the Indian in a peculiar way.

"Have you got any fish?" Philander asked, when they were in speaking distance.

"Have you got my moccasins?" said Gabrielle, giving him no time to answer.

The Indian sullenly shook his head and went on paddling.

"See here, Andy, you miserable low-down sneak Indian, you! Do you remember that bass I caught for you up the river? Well, now, you'd better bring them moccasins you promised me, or it won't be well for you!" The scolding her mother had given her for letting Andy have the fish, and Philander's prediction that she would never get the moccasins, together with her recent experience with the muscallonge, all combined to put her in a vicious mood against the Indian, and that stolid creature was probably surprised to hear such an outburst from her.

"Now mind what I tell you, you lazy glutton! You was glad enough to git the fish, wasn't you? If you ever show your dirty face around the Nonquon again without bringing them moccasins I'll shoot you, Andy. I'll shoot you so full of holes your friends over in the happy huntin' grounds won't know you. Now mind what I tell you!"

"Gabe, haven't you got a bite?" said Philander, watching her line.

"Guess I have," she answered, turning her attention from the Indian to her line. She manipulated the line more successfully this time, and soon had the fish alongside.

"Look out now you don't knock him on the side o' the boat when you're tryin' to land him. Swing him

well out over the gunwale. That's it. There you are! Good for you; you've got him!"

"Yes, but he's only a bass, after all. I wanted a 'lunge." Her lip hung rather low.

"Guess it's jest as well it wasn't a 'lunge that time, or you'd 'a' knocked him off the hook on the side o' the boat. A 'lunge always darts and dives the minute he gets up close enough to see the boat, and ten to one he goes right down under the boat. If you pull him up quick, you're sure to strike him ag'in' the side and knock him off the hook. When a 'lunge dives under the boat, jest keep the line tight for a bit, or pull a little on it, and he'll dart in the other direction, and when he is well away from the boat bring him up alongside, and whop him at arm's length clear over the side into the boat."

"Well, that's a nice bass, anyhow," said Gabrielle, looking down at the fish. "But I thought he would weigh forty or fifty pounds when I was bringin' him in."

"A bass is very deceivin'. Take a four or five pound bass on a trollin' line and he'll make more fuss than a 'lunge of twice the size. Gabe, I've changed my mind," suddenly veering from the subject, and looking at her in a quizzical manner.

"What do you mean?"

"I said Andy'd never bring you the moccasins, but I believe he will. I don't think he'll dare to show himself on this side o' the lake again, after that dressin' down you gave him, unless he has the moccasins. You're a terror, Gabe, when you git started; but I guess you wouldn't shoot anybody, would you?"

"N-no, I don't—s'pose—I—would. Yes, I would too,"

she said, suddenly changing her tone. "I'd shoot that blamed sneak of an Indian quick as I would a dog—and quicker—that is, if he doesn't bring me them mocasins."

"Well, I guess he'll bring 'em," said Philander, laughing. "He'll set his squaw to work a makin' 'em, and you can depend on 'em by the next time he goes to the village."

They trolled for some time before getting another bite, and Gabrielle was beginning to despair of catching the coveted "'lunge," when she felt a tug at the line, and this time, sure enough, it was a muscallonge. When the fish was near enough for Philander to get a glimpse of him, he exclaimed: "That's a 'lunge, Gabe, sure's you're born; and you've got him near the boat. Now look out and he's your fish."

But the announcement that she had at last really a muscallonge so nearly caught was too much for Gabrielle's presence of mind, and she instantly forgot all of Philander's instructions. Her one idea was to land the fish, and when she saw him dive out of sight it seemed to her that he was getting away from her, and she tugged at the line, without the slightest attention to Philander's warning. Up came the fish plump against the boat, and all that Gabrielle saw of him after that was the white gleam of his throat as he turned on his side and dove away into deep water.

"Too bad, Gabe, but it can't be helped. We'll catch one yet; they're biting fine to-day." And Philander started to row on again.

Gabrielle was completely crestfallen.

"It's all my fault, Philander. I'm a perfect fool! I ain't fit for nothin' at all. You'd 'a' caught that fish if

you'd had hold of the line. Even old B'gob-sir would 'a' done better'n that. I'm glad B'gob-sir ain't here," she added, reflectively. And then, looking at Philander resolutely, she broke out: "If I git another 'lunge on that hook I'll *land* him! Now you see if I don't. I'll land him, or I'll jump into the lake after him!"

"All right, Gabe, here goes." And he rowed away vigorously toward a stretch of deep clear water, where the largest fish were most likely to be found.

Gabrielle settled down into a reflective mood, with her eyes gazing abstractedly at the small ripples beside the boat. Possibly she was thinking of the lost fish, or of Andy and the moccasins, or of B'gob-sir Brown, or the wild man, or of Mrs. McFarlane and the potash kettle, or—possibly she was thinking of some one else. After they had gone on in this way for some time without a word, she suddenly started up and cried:

"Hold on, Philander! Stop the boat! The hook is caught in a log or something."

Philander stopped rowing and began to back water, watching the line closely as he did so. All at once he noticed a startled, excited look on Gabrielle's face.

"Philander! There's something *alive* on the hook! Look at that! Look—at—that! Why, Philander, what can it be? Back water quick, or the line'll git away from me!"

Philander saw there was something unusual on the hook by the way the spare line was spinning through Gabrielle's hand, and sent the boat back as fast as possible.

"I can't think what you've got on there, Gabe. I never saw anything act like that before. Don't let the line git away from you, whatever you do. That's the

best hook and line I've got, and I don't want to lose it."

She was struggling hard to prevent any more line running out, as she saw there were only a few yards more left in the boat. Her exertions interfered somewhat with the progress of the creature, whatever it was, and it soon changed its tactics and swerved to one side, leaving the line slack. Gabrielle immediately began to haul in, but was soon checked again, and the line went spinning as before.

"Look out, Gabe! Hang on! You haven't much spare line. I don't see what in the dickens it can be."

"Oh, I don't believe I can hold it much longer. I never saw anything pull—"

She was interrupted by a terrific splashing in the water away astern, and Philander stared open-eyed at the spot.

"Heavens alive, Gabe! that's a 'lunge. It's a 'lunge, sure's you're born! I never seen anything like it; it's big as a whale!"

"I'm afraid he's off the hook!" exclaimed Gabrielle, as the line slackened in her hand. "I guess he threw the hook when he jumped out of the water. Oh, he's gone, sure," she added, lugubriously, hauling in yard after yard of the wet line and casting it in a heap in front of her. "Well, it wasn't my fault that ti— Oh, glory! There he goes again. He's on all right." And away went the line more rapidly than ever.

"That's a terror of a fish, Gabe, and he's jest a gittin' waked up. We've got the biggest kind of a fight before us if we ever land him. No use talkin' about gittin' *him* into the boat."

"Whatever'll we do with him?" asked Gabrielle, screwing up her face as the line tore its way through her clenched fingers.

"We'll have to play him here in deep water till we tire him out, and then tow him ashore some place."

"Oh dear, I don't believe he'll ever give up. He seems to be gittin' stronger every minute." And it looked as if Gabrielle was right, for the fish was now heading for the middle of the lake at a terrific pace, and taking the boat after him as if it were no impediment. He made a much longer run of it this time, and seemed to verify Philander's observation that he was just waking up. He tugged viciously at the line, and appeared to be maddened by the resistance.

"Gracious! look where he's taking us this time. He's headin' straight for the island. I hope the line won't break. Oh, Philander, what if he'd git away from us now! I'd never git over it."

Her eyes were sparkling, and her cheeks flushed with the excitement; but Philander looked more grave and dubious.

"Don't count too much on gittin' him, Gabe. We'll do the best we can, but it'll take a long, hard fight to conquer that feller, and there's a thousand chances for us to lose him yet. The line is good and strong or it wouldn't have stood what it has, but the hook may break, if he hasn't swallowed it. I begin to think he has, though, from the way it hangs on; but if so the great danger is that the line'll git sawed off runnin' between his teeth. You must humor him all you can, but from the looks o' things he's goin' to take matters in his own hands, without consultin' anybody. I never seen a fish that could snatch a boat around like this."

Suddenly the muscallonge stopped running again, and Gabrielle hauled away at the slack, while Philander started the boat for the nearest available bit of land, called "Beaver-Meadow Point."

"We'll work him up this way as well as—"

"Oh, there he goes again!" shrieked Gabrielle, who felt the line drawn sharply around her back across the stern of the boat. "He's taken a new tack, and is goin' like the wind. I don't believe he'll ever give up!" she said, doubtfully, as she saw no symptoms of weariness on the part of the fish.

Matters certainly did begin to assume a rather serious outlook. The sky was clouding over, and a storm seemed brewing. An uneasy ripple agitated the surface of the lake, and the birds skimmed swiftly along close to the water.

"Gabe, we've got to do something perty soon, for there's a rainstorm comin'. You'd best let me have the line and see if I can manage him any better. You're wet through now handlin' the line, and your hands is all blistered. Let me have it, Gabe."

"No you don't," she answered, resolutely. "You stay where you are, and 'tend to the oars. I'll catch this fish myself or die tryin'. Oh, Philander," she continued, in a more persuasive tone, "I can't give him up. I'll do anything you say, only—let me be the one that catches him. I don't care for the rain. I'm wet now, and a little more won't hurt. There, he's turned."

And thus the fight went on for some time, first one side getting a slight advantage and then the other. To make matters worse for the occupants of the boat it soon began to rain. The great drops pelted their faces and beat into the boat, drenching them through.

The lake grew rough, and Philander was made busy keeping the boat at rights. The lowering sky darkened everything about them, and as the wind increased they could scarcely hear or see each other. The boat was by this time tossing terribly, and the slightest turn of the fish in the wrong direction would have sent them over in spite of everything.

"No use talkin', Gabe," called out Philander, "if this keeps up much longer we can't stand it. I'm afraid we'll have to give him up, if it gits worse."

"You 'tend to the boat," cried Gabrielle, her determination rising equal to the situation.

"That girl is a brick," thought Philander; "but I mustn't let her git drowned on account of a fish."

She had managed by considerable maneuvering to get in quite a length of spare line in case of an emergency, and the next movement of the fish proved the wisdom of her proceeding.

"Turn the bow to the right, quick!" she suddenly exclaimed. "He's gone across the stern again. Hurry up or the line'll give out."

By dint of the most expert use of the oars, Philander managed to swing the boat just as the tug came. In another instant they would have been over.

"That was a close shave, Gabe, and we can't afford to take any more chances like that. You'd better let the fish go, for we're goin' to have all we can do to 'tend to ourselves. It's gittin' rougher every minute."

"You 'tend to the boat," came back the dogged reply.

"Gabe, for God's sake, look out!" he yelled a minute later. "This boat'll be over in spite of me. Let him go, I tell you."

"Tend to your boat," she sang back through the blinding rain.

"Gabe, drop that line. Do you hear?" roared Philander, growing desperate.

"Yes, I hear."

"Well, drop it."

"I won't."

"Are you tryin' to drown us? See the way the boat pitches. Let it go. For C's sake, Gabe, let it go!" He threw more of a pleading into his voice, as he was growing truly terrified.

"All right, there it goes," she yelled. Philander breathed easier.

"Gabe, you're lyin'," he exclaimed a moment later. "You've got that line yet."

"Yes, and I'm goin' to keep it. You can make up your mind that I'll hang onto this line now if it takes us to the bottom. I'm goin' to have that fish, I tell you. You tend to the boat." And from that time she was mistress of the situation. Philander could do nothing with her, and with an anxious countenance gave his attention to keeping the boat at rights. She directed him now and then which way to turn, and through all that storm they sat facing each other, he battling with the boat and she with the muscallonge. But soon the wind died down, and the worst of the danger was over.

"We'll git this feller yet," said Gabrielle, triumphantly, as it began to clear up. "But we're too far away from Beaver Meadow Point to land him there. You'd best strike for the island. He's gittin' pretty well played out now, and we'll soon have the better of him."

"Gabe, you're a brick," Philander enthusiastically exclaimed. "I'm as anxious now to land him as you

are, but I swow I thought one spell you was goin' to drown us, sure."

"So I would if you hadn't 'tended to the boat," she answered, with a twinkle of the eye.

There was a gravel bottom some distance out from the island shore, and, towing the tired fish in that direction, they were soon within a few rods of the land. Here the gamy fellow made one more dash for liberty; but it was weak compared to his former rushes, and Gabrielle quickly had him under control again. As soon as the boat grated on the beach Gabrielle sprang out, and begging Philander to let her finish the work, she began hauling the line in hand over hand, watching all the while with boundless excitement the water in the direction of the fish. She realized his weight now better than ever, when she was standing on the firm ground instead of sitting in a boat that yielded easily to his strength.

"There he comes," she shouted, as the fish gave a great lurch in the shallow water, not yet decided whether he would give it up or not. "Oh, Philander, isn't he a beauty? Did you *ever* see anything like it?"

Her hat had long ago blown to the back of her head, where it was held by the strings under her chin; and her wet hair was tossed and tumbled about her face. Her cheeks were glowing with excitement, and her eyes—well, they were Gabrielle's eyes at their very best, and it was probably well for Donald's palpitation of the heart that he was not present to see them.

"Hold on a minute, Gabe. Don't pull too hard. Don't you see the line's nearly chawed off. He may git away yet."

"Here, take this," screamed Gabrielle, excitedly, put-

ting the line into Philander's hand; and before he understood her object she had dashed into the water and was wading toward the muscallonge.

"Look out! Don't grab him by the gills, Gabe, or you'll git your hands all cut up. Lift him by the body if you can."

But Gabrielle's attempt to do this resulted in such an unwieldy flop on the part of the fish that she sprang on him in sheer desperation, lest he should get away from her yet, and, regardless of lacerated hands, she seized him by the gills and dragged him struggling toward the bank, with his monstrous mouth wide open. She slipped on the stones, and tugged away, and breathed hard, but finally landed him high and dry, where Philander soon dispatched him with his hunting-knife. Then Gabrielle gave a whoop that would have done credit to an Indian after a victory. She danced around her prize, and snatched off her hat and waved it in the air.

"What did I tell you, Philander? Didn't I say I'd git him? Ain't he worth fightin' for? He's the biggest one you ever saw, ain't he? How much do you think he'll weigh?"

"Yes, he's the biggest 'lunge by ten or twelve pounds that I ever come across. I didn't think there was anything like him in Lake Scugog. He'll go at least forty pounds."

And Philander viewed the fish with a critical eye, and expressed as much satisfaction over the capture as Gabrielle. Then, turning to her, he continued: "But good Lordy, Gabe, look at them hands of yours! They're all tore and bleedin'. I told you not to catch him by the gills. And your dress, look at that! What'll your mother say?"

"I don't care for dress, nor hands, nor anything else. Jest run your eye over that beauty layin' there in the grass, and then talk about dress and hands, will you?"

And the sight certainly justified Gabrielle's enthusiasm. The monster was lying on his side, with his white throat sharply outlined against the green grass, his body, plump in proportion and trimly built; and his broad back, of a greenish brown color, blending with the foliage beneath him. Some spots of bright-red blood on his throat showed where Philander's knife had been, and his great jaws fell apart as if he had been utterly exhausted with the struggle. The grass was wet from the recent rain, and a fresh mist steamed up from the earth. The western sun peeped out after the storm, and some glorious rays came across the lake and brightened up the little scene on the island.

"We're goin' to have a fine spell o' weather to go home in," said Gabrielle, shading her eyes with her hand and looking across the lake.

"Yes, and we must be startin' right away," answered Philander, as he drew the boat up on land to empty out the water.

"It's a long pull from here to the Nonquon, and—why, Gabe, there's the bass you caught; I'd forgot all about him."

"So had I, but I don't care anything for *him*. You can throw him away if you like." She was looking all the while at the muscallonge, and Philander could not help laughing.

"Oh, my girl, you'd 'a' been mighty thankful to lug this bass home with you if you hadn't caught the 'lunge. He'd 'a' been a middlin' fine fish in your eye, only for you havin' one so much better. I'm goin' to

take this home and cook him for my supper, and you can do what you like with your old 'lunge."

Gabrielle's quick perception instantly caught the significance of this remark.

"Now, Philander, none of that. This 'lunge belongs to you as much as he does to me—and more too."

"No he don't; he's your 'lunge."

"I tell you he ain't. What right have I to him?"

"Because you caught him."

"I'd 'a' made a likely attempt at catchin' him if it hadn't been for *you*."

"I'd 'a' lost both the 'lunge and the best trollin' line I've got if it hadn't been for *you*."

"Now, Philander, quit mockin' me."

"Wouldn't mock you for the world."

"Philander!"

"Yes."

"Tell you what I'll do."

"Well?"

"We'll split the difference. You take half and me half."

"Not a split; it's your 'lunge."

"I just won't touch a scale of him."

"All right, then, we'll have to leave him here. Come, jump into the boat; it's time we was off."

She resolutely stepped on board, and the next instant Philander sent the boat spinning through the water, toward home. She watched him carefully for a moment, to see if she could not discover some symptoms of wavering on his part, but his face was serene and unconcerned, and every sweep of the oars took them farther away from the shore. In spite of herself she turned her head and looked back at the island, and the

first object that caught her eye was the glistening scales of the muscallonge lying on the bank. She gave vent to a piercing scream.

"*Philander!* Stop the boat! Turn around this minute and go back after that fish."

"Well, he's yours, is he?"

"Yes, he's mine—he's anybody's; only go and git him."

"Tell you what you can do with him, Gabe," said Philander, turning the boat and rowing to the island, "you can make a present of him to your father and mother, with your compliments and mine, and I'll invite myself up to your house for dinner to-morrow, and we'll see what he tastes like."

"Philander, you've got a heart as big as a washtub, and it's a good deal better than it's big. I'll cook a piece of the 'lunge for you myself."

And Philander was better pleased with that than he would have been had he caught all the fish in Lake Scugog.

VII.

A CRADLING MATCH.

MOSQUITOES were the natural pests of the Non-quon, and the use of screens for doors and windows had not yet entered into the philosophy of the inhabitants. During the hot summer nights no lights were permissible indoors, on account of its attractiveness for these tiny marauders, and in front of nearly every dwelling of an evening sat a family with a "smudge" in their midst; alternately blinking at the blinding smoke and striking out vigorously in the direction of a buzzing sound made by a daring member of the hated tribe. These "smudges" were made by building a small fire in the dooryard, and then throwing dirty chips or refuse on it, to make it smolder and smoke. Between the two evils of irritating mosquito-bites on the one hand and tear-bedimmed eyes from the smoke on the other, the inhabitants had a sorry choice; but the smart from the smoke did not last quite so long as that from the mosquito-bite, so they pretty generally submitted to the smoke.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Prosper Tryne to a group sitting in front of his store one evening, "there ain't no smudge equal to one made from cedar boughs."

"That's all you know about it," blurted out B'gob-sir Brown, making a desperate pass at a miniature demon that had settled behind his ear. "The blamed spunky, good-for-nothing, man-eatin' little d-d-devils, they jest

seem to enjoy such smoke as this. And I can't say I admire their taste," he continued, rubbing his bleary eyes in misery.

"Well, I didn't s'pose it was goin' to make you swear," said Prosper, with a sanctimonious air, which added fuel to the flame of the old fellow's wrath.

"Why, b'gob-sir," he said, jumping up and pointing his finger at Prosper, "you needn't p'tend to be so horrified at what a person says. Jest clean your own boots, will you? I'd rather say 'damn it' a dozen times a day, if I felt like it, than to cork up my meanness inside o' me for the sake of appearin' all right before folks, and then when I thought no one was lookin' spittin' it out onto some poor critter that couldn't take its own part. Oh, I—"

"Here, you sit down, and stop quarreling," said some one in the group, pulling his coat-tail.

He sat down, still shaking his head and muttering to himself something about "hypocercy," "church folks," etc.

Evidently he was in bad humor this evening. Prosper went into the store a moment for something, and the old fellow, not content with what he had said to his face, assailed him behind his back.

"This smoke puts me a good bit in mind of Prosper's religion," he said; "'tain't good for much but to blind folks."

The laugh that followed this made him forget his anger, and the conversation changed to the more peaceful topic of the crops.

"I seen Donald McFarlane cradlin' in that field of fall wheat as I come along to-night, and I tell you that young feller swings a cradle the slickest of any-

thing I ever seen. It was long after dark, when everybody else had quit work, and yet he was slashin' down the grain as if it was play for him."

"Yes," said another member of the party, moving around to the windward side of the smudge, "I believe Donald can cut more grain in a day than any young feller around here."

Prosper just came out of the store in time to hear this latter remark.

"Well, now, I don't know about that," he said, dubiously. "You haven't seen my boy Miley cradle wheat yet. He's been workin' down south this summer for old man Harvey, and they say he is a clinger with the cradle."

"Bet you \$4 Donald can cradle more wheat in a day than he can," spoke up Philander Hunt, who had been a quiet listener till now.

"Oh, I never bet," said Prosper, suddenly remembering that the next day was Sunday. "You know I don't bet. Tell you what I'll do, though. I'll agree to give \$4 to the Sunday-school if Donald wins, and you give four if Miley wins."

"All right," said Philander.

Prosper went coughing back into the store again, after encountering a dense wreath of smoke in his face.

"Philander, can't you see the length of your nose?" exclaimed B'gob-sir. "Who d'you s'pose handles the Sunday-school money? Why, it's Prosper himself, and he hain't much idee of losin' anything on that bet, I can tell you."

"Well, I hain't much idee of losin' either, for Donald can beat Miley any day."

"Don't know about that. Miley's a smart young

chap, I want you to know, even if he is Prosper's boy. Guess he takes it from his mother."

"Oh, I know a way to make Donald beat him," said Philander, significantly.

"How?"

"Jest leave that to me," waving his hand in front of him to drive away the smoke.

"Well, when do you want this cradlin' match to come off?" asked Prosper, coming to the door again.

"When that fourteen acres of Bonaventure's is ripe," answered Philander, pointing over toward the McGlorries.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Nothin', only I want the match to come off in that field of wheat."

"Why not have it on Mrs. McFarlane's place, or down to Harvey's, where Miley works?"

"Well, in the first place Mrs. McFarlane wouldn't have the match held on her farm, and in the second place Donald wouldn't go down to Harvey's to cradle, and in the third, fourth, fifth, and up to the five hundredth place, I won't agree to it bein' held anywhere else, only at Bonaventure's."

The day of the match brought with it a high degree of excitement around the Nonquon. Every one appeared interested in the outcome, with the possible exception of Gabrielle, who, if one might judge from outward evidence, cared not the toss of a feather which would win. The sun rose over the lake with a bright glare, and every one predicted a hot day.

"It's goin' to be a scorcher, boys," Philander said to the contestants as they stood whetting their scythes preparatory to the start. The two young fellows were

the best of friends, and while each was bent on winning, yet there was little likelihood of hard feelings between them, no matter which way the issue went.

"If it gets too blamed hot in the middle of the day, Donald, I'm goin' to lay down in the shade and take it easy, win or no win," said Miles, looking out over the waving wheat. Of course he was by no means so unconcerned about winning as he pretended to be; and neither was Donald, when he answered in his quiet Scotch way, with a mild twinkle in his eye, "Very well, Miles; I think I'll lie down beside you."

The field was divided into two equal parts, giving each seven acres to cut. Lots were cast for the two sides of the field. That standing nearest the house fell to Donald, and Philander thought he saw a more settled look of determination on Donald's face when he heard this. The greater part of this side was within full view of the house, and the fact was that Philander knew what he was doing when he insisted on having the match held at Bonaventure's. He probably would have smiled had any one remarked to him about Gabrielle's unconcern in the matter.

The young fellows started in with long, swinging strokes, and the grain fell plentifully at each sweep of the cradles. For the first hour or two it was difficult to tell which made the greater progress. Donald's gait was certainly slower than Miles', but he kept persistently at it, and did not stop so often to whet his scythe.

"Miley's goin' to win the match, sure's preachin'," prophesied B'gob-sir about the middle of the forenoon. "He can stop cradlin' as often as he likes, and take a rest whenever he wants to, and yet he holds his end up and gets over as much ground as Donald. I don't know,"

he added, shading his eyes with his hand, and looking carefully over the field, "but what he's already got the most stubble on his side. Oh, he's goin' to win."

"The wheat ain't all cut yet," remarked Philander, sententiously.

Bonaventure, who was standing near, simply shook his head. "I don't want either of the boys to hurt himself," he said, as he turned toward the house to see how the "women folks" were getting along with the dinner.

The sun was pouring down from a clear sky with an intensity which threatened to scorch everything to a crisp. Waves of heat flared up from stumps and stones, and floated away over the yellow heads of grain. Grasshoppers jumped here and there with a rasping, creaking noise, as if the sun had burned the oil from their machinery. The dog Sancho, who almost always accompanied his master, slunk away into a corner of the fence, and lay there with his tongue out and his mouth drooling at the corners.

"Whew!" exclaimed B'gob-sir, as he wilted down under a tree and took off his hat to fan himself. "This is what you might call hotter 'n love in dog-days. It almost seems 's if the sun and earth was a strikin' fire. Why, b'gob-sir, you could set a pail o' water out there in the sun and it'd soon be hot enough to bile trace-chains in. That last lot o' whisky Jerry got in —"

"Oh, don't mention whisky such a day as this," interposed Philander.

"Well, that's all right. I was jest goin' to give you my opinion of that whisky, but if you don't want to hear it, why, I guess I know how to button my lip."

"Button her up tight on that head."

Philander had heard B'gob-sir's opinion on "that last lot o' whisky" so many times already that his impoliteness was pardonable.

Of course the contestants in the cradling match were to take dinner with Bonaventure, and when Mrs. McGlorrie blew the dinner-horn, Philander and B'gob-sir walked with them down to the house, and then turned up the path toward the village, the latter meanwhile casting a wistful look into the kitchen, whence came the tempting odor of cookery.

"Come in, gentlemen, and keep us company at dinner," said Bonaventure. "We've plates on the table for you."

"Well, now, I don't understand this," exclaimed B'gob-sir. "I'd no idee of any such a thing as this, and I don't see how I can make up my mind to impose on you folks this way. Guess I'd better go on down to Jerry's to dinner, as usual." All the while the old fellow was edging toward the door, and had even taken off his hat. But Philander was not so easily persuaded, and was bent on going home, till Gabrielle came to the door and said, in a strangely softened voice:

"Now, Philander," and then, rushing out to where he stood, she took him by the arm, blushing to the roots of her glorious hair for some reason, and led him to the house.

"No use tryin' to back out when Gabe takes a feller in hand," said Philander, smiling.

During the meal Donald was awkward, as usual, and quiet. Gabrielle was quiet, but not awkward. She waited on the table, and the dishes moved under her hand as if by magic; at least so it seemed to Donald.

And he was perhaps not the only one who thought her expert, for Philander remarked that "Gabe was a natural-born housekeeper, if ever there was one."

"Yes, indeed, that she is," exclaimed Bonaventure, who was proud of his daughter, and approved of giving her a compliment occasionally.

"Yes, and Gabe is never going to get married," piped in little Dennie. "An' I'm never goin' to get married either. We've got it made up between us to live together always, and Gabe is goin' to keep house for me, and I'm to make a living for us both. Ain't we, Gabe?"

"Of course, Dennie."

But what could have made her blush so when they all laughed at Dennie's remark? Gabrielle came nearly being awkward after that; at least she almost dropped a dish once or twice, and was apparently ill at ease during the rest of the meal.

As the men sat in the shade of the trees down by the stable after dinner, B'gob-sir ruminated over the rebuff Philander had given him about his opinion of Jerry's last lot of whisky, and thought it a good chance to get even with him.

"Say, Philander, now come right out and acknowledge the corn. Git down to hard-pan for once, and admit the truth of the matter. I know it's pressin' you perty hard, but you might as well out with it first as last. Who ketched that 'lunge you and Gabrielle brought home the day you was out trollin'? You didn't ketch him yourself, I'll bet a bottle of—I'll bet my best pair of boots on that. I guess you got him from the Injuns, didn't you? Come now, let's have the hull facts in the case."

"Well," said Philander, with some hesitation, "if the truth must be told, I *didn't* catch him."

"What did I tell you?" exclaimed the old fellow, enthusiastically, jumping to his feet and looking around at the others as if he had at last exposed the impostor. "Why, b'gob-sir, I knowed it all along. When—you—undertake—to—pull—the—wool—over—the—eyes—of—a—man—of—the—name—of—Brown,—you'd—better—hire—out—to—a—cardin'-mill—for—a—spell,—and—learn—more—about—the—kind—of—wool—you're—usin'. Well now, who'd you buy him of? You might as well tell us that."

"Didn't buy him of anybody."

"Well, who give him to you?"

"No one."

"*What?*"

"No one, I said."

"What do you mean?"

"Mean what I say."

"Well, but—well now, what—what in the name o' snakes are you tryin' to git through you, Philander? There's a lie out some place."

"Not unless it's on your side."

"You—say—you—didn't—ketch—that—'lunge?"

"Yes."

"And you didn't buy him of any one?"

"No."

"And no person give him to you?"

"No."

"Well, I'd like to know how in the dickens you come by him, then."

"Gabe caught him."

"Why, I thought you—well you told—

Humph! Some folks think they're so c-c-cussed sharp, anyway." And he walked off along by the fence, muttering to himself.

Not a word had been said during the noon hour about the prospective outcome of the match, but it was plainly evident to all—and to Donald particularly—that Miley had cut the most wheat in the forenoon. The Scotch boy, accordingly, threw one suspender from his shoulder, letting it hang at his side, and started in at a pace that indicated a struggle. And there was one.

The morning's work was play to what the afternoon developed. The perspiration—that safety-valve of hot humanity—poured down their backs, leaving great wet streaks on their cotton shirts. Donald plodded along with grim determination, scarcely raising his eyes from his work. The air was hot to breathe, the stubble cracked under his boots, his eyes were blurred with the heat and the dripping perspiration, his lips felt parched and dry, his tongue cleaved unpleasantly to the roof of his mouth, and the terrible exertion began to distress him. As he was crossing the lower end of the field he suddenly came to a tin pail sitting in the swath he was just cutting. It was placed where he could not possibly avoid it, and on picking it up he found it half-filled with cold spring-water, into which had been dropped some oatmeal. Was there ever a more refreshing drink than this? Donald thought not, and as he replaced the lid after gratifying his thirst he cast his eye across the field to see if he might discover who had brought it for him. His first idea was that it must be Philander, but he remembered seeing him walk down the road toward the village. All at once he

thought of something that he dare not think of. He quickly put down the pail and started cradling with new vigor, both physically and mentally. He was determined to win that match. When he made the next round the pail was gone. Once again during the afternoon he found it sitting in the wheat, with the cool, delicious—no other word would have suited Donald—oatmeal-water in it.

He finished his seven acres at least half an hour ahead of Miles, who toiled through to the end as if it were the longest half-hour of his life.

"Miles," said Donald, going up and shaking hands with him, "I wouldn't repeat that day's work for all the wheat we cut. If ever I cradle another match I'll pick out an easier man to cradle against."

"The trouble with me was that I put into it too hard in the early part of the day and played myself out," remarked Miles.

Was there ever a son of Adam who could accept defeat without offering an excuse for it?

"Well, Prosper," said Philander, as they were all assembled at the store in the evening, "I suppose your pocket-book will be \$4 lighter to-night and the Sunday-school \$4 richer?"

"Don't know about that," answered the storekeeper, with a queer look in his eye.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, what do *you* mean?"

"Why, that was the agreement. I was to give \$4 if Miley won, and you was to give \$4 if Donald won."

"I know; but I can't see as either of them won."

"How do you make that out? Donald got through half an hour sooner than Miley."

"I don't see as that has anything particular to do with it."

"You don't?"

"No."

"Well, I'd like to know what you're driving at. We divided that fourteen acres into two equal parts, and the one that finished his half first was to be the winner, wasn't he?"

"Well, not exactly. You forgit what you said when you first give me the bluff. You said you'd bet me \$4 that Donald could cradle more wheat in a day than Miley could. Now you said just a minute ago that the field was divided into two equal parts. Accordin' to that Miley cut just as much wheat as Donald. 'Takin' you at your own word, don't you see? Oh, no, I can't pay out any \$4 on such a bet as that."

And he never did.

VIII.

A BATTLE WITH TURNIPS.

MRS. McFARLANE held little communion with the inhabitants of the Nonquon village. Her sympathies lay for the most part toward the Scotch settlement farther north, and she looked with little favor upon Donald's intimacy—such as it was—with the villagers. The one individual around the Nonquon who held her esteem was Bonaventure, but for that matter he was esteemed by every one who knew him.

"Now, McGlorrie, what think you?" she called to Bonaventure one morning as he was passing her place. "I hear that Prosper Tryne is saying that he will not be trusting me for any more things at his store. The good-for-nothing make-believe! I naver was owing him so much as the price of a pail of swill in my life."

"Well, Mrs. McFarlane, I don't think Prosper would say such a thing as that about you. He would be glad, I am sure, to give you all the credit you want. Some one has been trying to make mischief, and you shouldn't listen to such reports as that."

"Trying to make mischief; that's what they are; and that's all they have to think about down in the village. The good-for-nothing lazy lot. They naver do a day's work, but just sit around and smoke and spet, and spet and smoke. And then they go tramping all over a body's farm hunting the poor foxes that naver harmed them, and—"

"But, Mrs. McFarlane, I thought you said the foxes were eating all of your pullets last winter."

"Eating my pul-lets; and that's what they were, the good-for-nothing thiev-ing beasts. I will be setting a trap for them, if they will be up to their old tricks again this year, the mis-erable scamps! Mr. McGlorrie, look you over here in the yard, and see what a fine lot of lye I have been running off. It's all from the ashes of beech and maple, too; but I'm afeard it will every bit spoil for want of boiling."

"Why don't you send down to my place and get the big kettle to boil it in?"

"Tone-alt! Tone-alt!" she shouted, looking toward the barnyard where Donald was engaged. "Tone-alt, hear you what Mr. McGlorrie says? You're to go down and get his ketash poh-tal to boil soap. Yes, Mr. McGlorrie," turning to him again, "if Tone-alt be speered we'll have a ketash poh-tal of ower ain in another 'ear. Well, good-by; I must be going to see if the black soo is in the garden, the old hus-sy."

After Bonaventure had gone on his way, she trudged over to the barnyard, and said:

"Tone-alt, I canna see the old black soo any place. She must be in the garden. Here, Tow-ser, come you with me and we will drive her out, the old hus-sy."

Towser, with one ear on the alert, leaped over the fence, and began to make a noisy circuit of the garden. Mrs. McFarlane, with increasing fire in her eye, followed after, and disappeared around the other side of the house, shaking her head and muttering vengeance on the old sow as she went. She soon appeared again, and calling to Donald, said:

"Tone-alt! come you and help me find the old soo.

She must be here in the garden some place, I think. Maybe she is under the house, the old hus-sy. Here, Towser, si-boy, si-boy!'

"Why, mother, here is the old sow lying in her pen all the while. She has never been near the garden."

"Lying in her pen is she? The old hus-sy. I'll have her to know—"

But Donald heard no more, as the old lady disappeared beyond the wood-pile to put a fresh pail of water on the leach.

Other people usually made their soap in the spring, but Mrs. McFarlane was liable to start her leach going at any season, and it seemed to Donald that she took an especial delight in making soap as often as possible on account of the excuse it gave her for borrowing somebody's kettle. Two things were mysteries—where she got so many ashes and what she did with all of the soap.

"Tone-alt," she said one day, somewhat later, "it is time we are digging the tarnips. It will be freez-ing, and the snow will be coming, if we do not get them in. Go you and dig a pit, and we will begin on the morrow."

"What are we going to use to cover the turnips with in the pit before we put the dirt on them? We've no pea-straw this year. I think I'd better go down in the swamp and cut some green brush."

"Green presh! Green presh, did you say, Tone-alt? Well, I naver! Bless me, what a boy! You'll do nothing of the kind, Tone-alt. Go you over to Tougald McLaughlin's and borrow some pea-straw."

Donald would much rather have labored with the brush than to go on a borrowing expedition, but his

mother's attitude on the question left him no alternative.

The McFarlanes had not yet risen to the dignity of owning a root-house, and were obliged to keep their turnips from freezing by using a pit or trench. This was lined with straw, and the turnips thrown in and piled up to a gable shape, after which more straw was scattered over them, and finally earth thrown on them to a depth which prevented freezing. Mrs. McFarlane was never quite happy from the time the first autumn chill was felt in the air till her turnips were safely housed in this fashion. She always insisted on going out into the field herself to help gather them in, and if the truth be told, she was no mean manipulator of her favorite root. She could handle more turnips than the average man.

This year, when the pit was well filled, they had nearly half a wagon-load over, and she said to Donald:

"Go you on and bank over the pit, while I drive these in the wagon down to Mr. McGlorrie. He has no turnips this year, and I will be taking these to him."

"You'd best let me put his kettle in the wagon too, and take that home. You've got your soap all boiled."

"Naver you mind, Tone-alt. I will be asking Mr. McGlorrie for his flail, when I am taking him the turnips, and the flail and kettle can go back together."

"What do you want with his flail, mother? We have one already." Donald was in despair. She looked around severely at him, and said:

"Tone-alt, I will be helping you this year with the threshing, and we will want two flails."

"Why, mother, I can easily do the threshing myself, and anyhow, if you want a flail I can make you one."

"Naver you mind, Tone-alt. Go on with your work," she said, significantly, as she drove away.

When she arrived at the McGlorries, she drove up in front of the door and shouted:

"*Mr. McGlorrie!*"

Mrs. McGlorrie appeared at the door, with her sleeves rolled up and her hands white with flour from mixing bread. Evidently she was very busy, and was impatient with an interruption of any kind, least of all from the woman who was always trying to borrow something.

"My husband is not at home," she said, with a tone of dismissal in her voice.

Mrs. McFarlane sat like a statue in her wagon a moment, and then, evidently bent on being conciliatory, she turned her head, and, looking back into the wagon-box, asked if Mrs. McGlorrie had any room in her cellar.

Mrs. McGlorrie jumped at the conclusion that she was going to ask the privilege of storing something in the cellar for the winter. "Jist like her'," she thought to herself. "Jist like her. She'll want to borry the rail finces next, and then the house and barn, and fin'llly the whole farm. Plague take her!" And then, speaking aloud, she snapped out:

"No, I haven't."

The Scotch woman's resentment began to kindle in spite of her. She stood up in the wagon, with fire in her eye, and pointing her bony finger at the turnips, began:

"Here's as fine a lot of tarnips—"

Just then Mrs. McGlorrie smelled her bread burning, and breaking into Mrs. McFarlane's speech, she exclaimed:

"Well, you can't leave your turnips here; I can tell you that now. You can take care of 'em yourself. My bread's burning, and I've no time to talk with you. Take your old turnips away." She hurried into the house, slamming the door after her.

Mrs. McFarlane was furious. Jumping in among the turnips, she seized a large one and flung it viciously at Mrs. McGlorrie's door.

"The good-for-nothing hus-sy! I'll have her to know—" And bang! went a second turnip against the door, breaking it open. "Your brade is burn-ing, is it?" she yelled. "Come you out here, and I'll break your bones, you good-for-nothing. You won't have my tarnips, hey?" And an incessant shower flew from the wagon into Mrs. McGlorrie's kitchen, rolling all over the floor.

The Irishwoman was soon aroused to defense, and forgetting all about her bread, she seized some of the turnips and began flinging them back at her assailant.

A vigorous flow of words and turnips followed. "You old hus-sy"—"You murtherin' old hathen you"—"I'll have you to know"—"You dirty old throllop, take that, will you?"—"You Irish soo, I'll be breaking your bones"—"Oh, hear that now, will ye? You old Scotch vagabond, I'll smash your skull with a skillet."

It was a battle royal between the Scotch and Irish, fought out on Colonial soil, but the woman in the wagon having the "coigne of vantage" may be said to have come off victorious. She threw the last turnip from the wagon, and muttering a final imprecation on the head of her antagonist, drove off, leaving behind her in Mrs. McGlorrie's kitchen a pile of turnips, and in her bosom a tempest of wrath.

IX.

THE DEER-HUNT.

THE season of greatest activity around the Nonquon was approaching. During the fall and winter months the inhabitants were more in their native element than at any other time. Hunting and lumbering suited the taste of the average Nonquonite better than the pursuit of the plow; and there were several logging-camps in the vicinity, which annually supplied the material for the saw-mills at Port Rowen, a town situated about eight miles from the Nonquon, at the foot of the lake.

Bonaventure was foreman of a camp down on Beaver Meadow Point, and had begun to make preparation for the winter's work. The cutting was mostly done in the early fall, and the logs "snaked" into piles and placed on skidways ready for hauling to the lake with sleds when the snow came. They were then dumped on the ice, and each lot surrounded by boom-timber, and allowed to remain till the ice broke up in the spring, when they were towed to Port Rowen by boat. Many of the shantymen were French, and this rendered the work very congenial to Bonaventure. He was filled with a stirring animation from the time the first tree was cut in the fall till the last log was hauled in the spring.

"Why, b'gob-sir," Mr. Brown used to say, "Bonaventurer is jest like two different persons summer and

winter. In summer he's like a white man, and talks like one, but in winter he splutters around and jabbers away jest like the rest of them French fellers he has workin' for him."

And there was much truth in this remark, for Bonaventure dropped quite naturally into the French dialect the moment he was brought into contact with Frenchmen. "Mon Dieu" was a favorite expression of his through the winter, and one day when B'gob-sir said to him, "Bonaventer, I'd like to know what in the dickens you mean by 'Mo Doo,'" he answered with animation, "Now, my fran', that's just it. That's the most beautiful word. 'Mon Dieu'—that is what the Frenchman say when he wish to say 'my goodness.' Beau-ti-ful word, b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l."

He would linger over a French phrase that caught his fancy as if he were rolling a "sweet morsel under his tongue." His translations were seldom literally correct, it is true, but he usually caught the true spirit of the term after hearing it used several times by his countrymen.

One day in October Philander said to him:

"Bonaventure, you have your cutters and skidders to work now, and you'd better come out with us for a deer-hunt some day."

"Very well. Who is going?"

"Jerry—you know Jerry is a splendid shot—and Prosper—he's got a good dog; and Barlow Dreeme is coming out from the Port to go with us; and then I thought we'd take old B'gob-sir along to have some fun. He has never been out with us, but is always braggin' what a shooter he is. I don't believe he ever

shot anything in his life, but we can git some fun out of him."

"All right; I'm ready any time."

The party accordingly started one morning about 4 o'clock, taking with them each a gun, and the two dogs, Sancho and Mose, tied under the wagon. They were to drive about seven miles to a spot "across the ma'sh," and leaving the horses tied to the foot-board of the wagon, which was well filled with hay, were going to hunt in that vicinity.

"Well, I want to say right here," grumbled old B'gob-sir, as he sat humped up in the wagon, "that I can't see the pherlosophy of gettin' out of bed and goin' joltin' over these rough roads in the middle of the night to start deer. Why, b'gob-sir, the deer'll be asleep for hours yet. I don't believe in goin' snoopin' round in the woods with nothin' but the stars blinkin' at you, tryin' to prod some deer up out of a sound sleep with the muzzle of a gun."

"The deer'll be awake long before we git there," said Philander, smiling at the old fellow's discomfort. "I'll bet if you was over in the ma'sh in the right spot this minute you'd see three or four deer jest a gittin' up out of their bed of leaves, a shakin' off the dust, and humpin' their backs away up in the air to stretch themselves."

"Would, hey? Darn sight bigger fools than I ever give 'em credit for, then. Them blamed dogs under the wagon seem to enjoy this kind of thing. Caution how much alike some dogs and some men are."

"It's plain to be seen you ain't much of a hunter," laughed Jerry. "You'd best go back home and tend bar while I'm gone."

That was almost too much for the hostler, who intuitively cast a glance back toward the Nonquon. This brought such a roar from the men that he hitched himself around in his seat again, and darted a threatening look at his companions.

"Well now, I'll jest systematically show you fellers about shootin' before we git home. You've dragged me into this thing, and now I'm goin' to show you."

The pale moon was just settling down in the west, and the stars, wearied with their nightly vigil, were retreating into the depths of the limitless canopy beyond. It was in that cold, gray, cheerless hour before the dawn, when the glories of the night have all vanished, and the glories of the day have not yet arrived; when a chilling sense of misery steals over the human animal who chances to be abroad at that hour. The time when heavy, reeking mists creep around inanimate objects in field and swamp, rendering them indistinct and goblin-like, and when the atmosphere is dank, and cold, and irritating to the nostrils.

"A feller'd think there was frozen pepper scattered through the air this morning," B'gob-sir remarked, after they had jolted along over the rough road for some time in silence. "Jerry, did you bring a bottle with you?"

"Why, you wouldn't expect me to bring a bottle with a party like this, would you?"

"Well, that last lot o' whisky you got in is mighty poor stuff, I want to tell you. It's jest as well you didn't bring any of it."

"How do you know what it's like? I thought you said you hadn't tasted a drop of liquor in three weeks."

"Well, neither I have. I guess I can tell liquor, though, when I see it."

"Tell what it tastes like by looking at it, can you? Sure you didn't jest smell of it?"

"Now see here," he answered, bristling up, "you think you're goin' to corner me—"

"No I don't. I was simply wondering how you knew anything about the quality of that whisky without tasting it. I—"

"Why, good Christianity among the Hottentots," he thundered out, "of *course* I tasted it. How else would I know? That is, I didn't exactly taste it, you know; I jest took a little from the bottle, and—well, I didn't *drink* any of the stuff—couldn't go it, you see—it tasted so like all fury and brimstone; didn't get the pucker out of my throat for an hour. Makes my stomach frizzle yet to think of it. Sure you hain't got a bottle here with you, Jerry?"

Jerry slipped a small flask into his hand, and B'gob-sir, tilting back his head, was oblivious to earthly woes during the next few seconds.

"Mighty poor stuff, I tell you," he sighed as he handed the empty flask to the tavern-keeper. He submitted, however, more complacently to the miseries of the situation for the remainder of their journey.

It was broad daylight by the time they reached the hunting-ground, and after a cold lunch they started out. By common consent Philander was master of the hunt. He and Barlow Dreeme knew more about the ground than any of the others. They were conversant with all the runways, and knew the best spots to station the men. B'gob-sir was placed on a runway not half a mile from the horses and wagon. Jerry was sent farther to the northeast, where two runways intersected, and Bonaventure was to go along down the

marsh creek to a point at which the deer usually crossed when too hard pressed in the marsh. Prosper Tryne said he would stay around in the vicinity of the camp, and if the deer ran too far away he would put in his time shooting partridge and rabbits. "I'll load one barrel with buck-shot," he said, "in case I see a deer, and the other with fine shot for smaller game."

Rifles were seldom used in those days by the Non-quonites for deer-shooting. Double-barreled guns, loaded with buck-shot or a ball, formed the favorite fire-arm.

Barlow could go where he pleased, or where occasion seemed to require him most through the day. He started away off toward the east, with the evident conviction that some of the deer would likely elude the men in the marsh, and cross the creek in the direction of the higher timber.

As Philander was walking away, or rather being dragged away by the dogs, down toward a thick part of the marsh, where he expected to put them out, B'gob-sir said to him:

"Now see here, Philander, you ain't stickin' me off some place where there ain't any game, are you? I come out here for the express purpose of shootin' a few deer, and I don't want to be hoodwinked out of it."

"No, you're right on the main runway, where a deer is sure to pass you within twenty minutes from the time the dogs start it. Keep your wits about you, and don't git the 'buck fever' and miss your shot."

"Buck fever? What do you mean?"

"Well, that's a pretty bad give-away. I guess you haven't shot your first deer yet or you wouldn't ask such a question as that. Never you mind, you jest go

on up the runway, and you'll know soon enough what 'buck fever' is."

B'gob-sir went pottering off to his place, muttering something about certain persons thinking themselves "so darn smart; but he'd show 'em before the day was over."

When Philander had worked his way well down into the thicket, he had not long to search for a lead. Both Sancho and Mose were frenzied with excitement in anticipation of the chase, and scurried here and there to the limit of their chains, with noses eagerly sniffing the ground. Suddenly they halted, and both simultaneously gave a yelp, and strained away at their chains like fiends. They had struck a scent.

"Hold on, boys; I don't know about that track. Wait till we see if it's as fresh as you seem to think it is."

He followed the dogs over the leafy ground till they came to a bare spot that permitted an examination of the tracks.

"All right, my boys; I guess that'll do for a starter," and he unbuckled the collars.

Away they went, out of sight in an instant, and it was not long before he heard them "giving tongue" off down in the swamp in a rather unexpected locality. He hurried away to the west, thinking the deer might circle in that direction, and thus evade the men on the runways. He had not gone far, however, when he heard the dogs again, and this time it was plain that the deer had headed about and were making for the main runway, on which B'gob-sir was stationed.

That gentleman, on hearing the dogs, had placed himself behind a fallen tree about thirty yards from the runway, and dropping on his knees, took repeated

sight across the tree in the direction of the runway, with the evident idea of studying the proper method of shooting the deer as soon as it appeared. He could hear the dogs coming nearer and nearer, and presently their great deep-toned signals sounded startlingly close at hand as they ascended a rise of ground on the side of a ravine which lay between him and the thicket. By the time they reached the summit he could hear something hurrying through the bushes in advance of them, and coming at a bounding pace down across the ravine.

Shades of the Romans! What ailed his heart when that sound definitely struck his ear? It was jumping up and down in his breast, and knocking about under his ribs, and bounding up into his throat enough to choke him. The nearer the sound came the wilder his heart acted, and it suddenly developed an astonishing number of convolutions that in all his experience with it he had never known it to possess. And his hands! What was wrong with them? They were shaking in a way which threatened to send the gun tumbling to the ground. In fact, he was shivering from head to foot, as if struck with a sudden chill. "I wish the good Lord I had some of Jerry's whis—" Bang! He had seen a tawny thing—maybe there were two of them, he was not sure—come bounding along the runway, with head thrown nobly back over the shoulder, and instinctively his trembling fingers had somehow pressed the trigger. The shock of the gun added to his excitement, but it brought back the feeling to his fingers, and seeing something else leaping up the runway, he jumped to his feet and let fly the other barrel. Fortunately his aim was wild enough to scatter the shot away overhead among the upper branches of the trees, for

the second object he shot at was Sancho, who followed up the chase without the slightest attention to the crazy old sportsman behind the tree. The next instant Mose dashed along with a resounding yelp, and when it began to dawn on the trembling victim of "buck fever" that the game had actually gone right past him unharmed, within thirty yards of his gun, he scrambled quickly over the tree and ran pell-mell up the runway, with the vague idea of somehow overtaking the deer and retrieving his pitiable defeat. But the fast receding bay of the hounds in the distance soon brought him to his senses, and convinced him that reparation for that blunder must be made in some other way, if indeed it ever could be made. He came walking slowly back, and with a big sigh sat down on the fallen tree. It all seemed like a dream to him.

"I'd give anything to know if there *was* two of 'em," he said to himself. Then suddenly breaking out as if to offer himself some consolation, "Why, b'gob-sir, there isn't a man in the hull party that could 'a' done any better. That blamed deer was jest a—I'd give my best pair of boots to know if there *was* two—was jest a flyin'. The dogs had it about scared to death, and a feller can't be expected to shoot anything when it's a climbin' for kingdom come at that rate." And then, failing to recognize the contradiction in his next remark, he shook his head and vowed, "If I git another chance like that I'll show 'em. I'll blow the everlastin' liver an' lights right out of the next deer that tries to run past me."

He reloaded with animation, and then sat looking with more of a subdued air up into the top branches of the tall trees around him. Suddenly he heard the report of a gun off in Jerry's direction. "Bet my life

he missed it," he chuckled. "Don't know, though. I'm afraid Jerry's a pretty good shot."

It grew tiresome sitting there watching the runway, and he finally wandered off farther down into the woods, and groped around to see if he could find some other kind of game to shoot.

"There ain't any deer around here to amount to anything, anyhow," he muttered to himself. "And there don't seem to be a blamed thing else to shoot, either. I don't see what Philander wanted to bring us into such a place as this for, unless it's to make fools of us."

It must have been about the middle of the forenoon, when, after tramping around for a long time, he came to a space more open than usual, and stood looking at the tall trees with the vain hope of seeing something in their branches worthy of a shot. It was a quiet, leafy spot, with the hush of an autumn day upon it. The air was still, and the subdued sounds of nature showed her in a mood of mellowest harmony. A detached leaf here and there gently floated to the ground, and a broken twig or bit of bark snapped lightly, and tumbled end over end with more rapid flight. The trees sighed softly, as if in contentment with the fullness of the season, and the sun, peeping in among the branches, showed the beech-nuts just bursting from their rough and burry shells.

The hostler was not poet enough to be visibly impressed with all of these beauties, and was just turning away disgusted with the idea that he could see no squirrels or partridge, when suddenly he stood face to face with three pairs of great soft-brown eyes that looked wonderingly at him from a slight knoll not fifty yards away. He had not heard a sound, and the sud-

den appearance of the deer—an old buck, a doe, and their fawn—so surprised him that he stood staring at them with his wits gone a-begging. It was only for an instant; the deer suddenly swerved and bounded out of sight behind the knoll. Then B'gob-sir exhibited some vigorous movements. He gripped his gun tighter and broke into a lumbering pace up the side of the knoll. He cocked his gun as he ran, fully expecting the deer would halt within shot and stand staring at him again. That was all he knew about the habits of deer. "Not a hide nor hair of the blamed critters anywheres to be seen," he ejaculated, as he stood breathless on the summit. "If I had only been expectin' 'em." He dashed pell-mell down the other side of the knoll, in the direction the deer had gone, and began searching here and there behind every clump of bushes. Possibly the brave sportsman had a vague idea that the deer had taken it into their heads to lie down and rest. As he was pottering about he was suddenly startled by a terrific explosion, and the gun, jumping from his nerveless hand, fell to the ground. "What in the name o' cats could have made that c-c-cussed gun go off?" he exclaimed, enraged at the fright he had received. He picked it up, looked at it curiously a moment, and then muttered, "Humph! I guess I must have forgot to uncock it. Geewhitaker, how it kicked!"

Of course all hopes of finding the deer vanished with the report of the gun, and he concluded to go over where Jerry was and see what luck he was having. "And mebbe he has another flask," added the unfortunate sportsman, who certainly needed something in the form of a solace.

So he started out, and—got lost.

X.

THE HUNT CONTINUED.

THE other men were having varying success. Bonaventure had committed the cardinal sin of the sportsman, and was just now suffering the penalty of remorse. He had left the runway unguarded for a short time, with the idea of getting a "still-hunt" shot, and in his absence a deer had crossed the creek at the exact spot where Philander had sent him.

Philander, after a sufficient reconnoiter to convince him of the uselessness of remaining where he was, struck out across the marsh in Bonaventure's direction. He found that gentleman berating himself in good French fashion:

"Look here! Look at this, Philander," he said, pointing to the fresh tracks of the deer as it had gone down into the creek. "And look over there," signifying the spot where the deer had clambered out of the water on the other side, leaving plenty of evidence with its dripping hide. "All my fault; all my fault! I went away, Philander. I went away, like the great fool I am, and you see what comes of it."

He shook his big curly head in anger at himself.

"Never mind, Bonaventure; you're not the first one that's missed a good shot in that way." Then, searching carefully along the runway, he continued: "There was only one dog after that deer. I wonder what has become of the other one. This is Sancho's track, and

I wish Mose had stayed with him, for Mose is a young dog and hasn't always the best judgment. He's plucky, though—the pluckiest pup I ever saw. He'd go right into a burnin' brush-heap after his game any day.

"Yes, he's more faithful than I am," grumbled Bonaventure, looking ruefully at the deer-tracks. He could not forgive himself.

"Oh pshaw, Bonaventure, that's all right. I missed a deer once myself in that very— Hark! That deer has doubled, I believe. I hear the dog. He's coming this way, sure. You may get a shot yet."

"If I do, I don't deserve it."

"Well, keep cool; and we'll see."

Sure enough, the deer was coming back, and evidently on the same runway.

"You slip across the creek on that fallen log, Bonaventure, and git a pop at him as he comes down to the water. I'll stay on this side and let him have it in case you miss him."

Bonaventure was determined the deer should not get past him alive—he wanted to retrieve his lost reputation; and as the deer, a lusty buck, was just springing over a log a few feet from the water, he fired both barrels in quick succession. Over the log the buck went like a flash, carried by the impetus of his flight; but on reaching the ground he collapsed and tumbled heels over head.

"That's a good shot," called out Philander.

"Yes," admitted Bonaventure, at last appeased.

"Guess I'll cut his throat."

"Look out he doesn't turn on you and strike you with his fore feet. He hasn't quite give up yet. Go round behind him—and then look out for his horns. A dyin'

buck is a dangerous thing to fool with. Cut quick and jump away. Hello, Sancho, old fellow! Here you are. Good boy." And he was instantly fondling and petting the dog, and talking to him as if he were human. Who will contend that the dog did not fully understand all he said? There is a subtle sympathy between hunter and hound that might well read humanity many a lesson.

Barlow Dreeme was having a rather unique experience that afternoon, which we will allow him to relate in his own words in due time. His friends were surprised to see him come into camp toward evening with nothing to show for his day's shooting, for Barlow was considered a good shot. He did not come alone, be it said. Immediately behind him labored the "buck fever" patient, with a strangely unsettled, unsatisfied, unnatural air about him, and a reserve which indicated that his brain was working on some unusual problem of recent date.

As Barlow and B'gob-sir approached the wagon, they saw the deer in it.

"Hello!" said Barlow, "who shot them?"

"Bonaventure shot the buck and Jerry the doe," said Philander.

As the men were filling their pipes preparatory to starting home, Bonaventure related his experience with the buck—not forgetting to censure himself once more for leaving the runway.

"And where did you shoot yours?" asked Barlow of Jerry.

"Over in there, between the third and fourth concessions," said Jerry. "The dogs hadn't been out more'n half an hour when I heard a couple of shots down in B'gob-sir's direction" [here the gentleman in question

shifted uneasily to the far side of the wagon, and stood his gun against the side-board, looking away in a constrained manner at something far off in the woods], "and I supposed all the game would be shot before it had a chance to reach me. But presently a couple of deer came along—" ("Then there *was* two of 'em, after all," muttered B'gob-sir to himself) —"and I managed to keel this one over. Mose stopped running when the doe fell, but Sancho kept on after the buck. I started for the wagon with the doe, and thought I'd bring Mose with me and tie him up the rest of the day, for you can't tell what a pup will do if he gets to running alone. But he give me the slip somehow, and the last I heard of him he was givin' tongue away off east, and by the sound of things I guess the deer had started for Fraser's Creek."

"Yes," said Barlow, somewhat indifferently. "I was over there. They crossed the creek, and headed away northeast toward the cedar swamps. Mose will chase that deer till either one or the other drops."

The men showed their surprise at this information by asking almost in chorus:

"How was it you didn't get a shot at the deer if you were over there."

"Had something else on hand," was the laconic reply, given in a tone that admitted of no further questioning.

"Say, Prosper," remarked Jerry, turning to the owner of Mose—who, by the way, had bagged some fine partridge during the day—"ten to one your dog is lost. What'll you take for your chances on him?"

"What'll you give?"

"Ten dollars."

"He might come back, and if he does he's worth more than that."

"He might not come back, and if he doesn't he isn't worth anything."

"Tell you what I'll do," said Prosper, after a pause. "You give me \$20, and if Mose comes back he's your dog. If he doesn't come back, I'll make it right with you by givin' you ten dollars' worth of goods out of the store."

Jerry knew too well the probable price of Prosper's goods in a deal of that kind, and declined the offer.

XI.

A HORSE-TRADE.

AS the hunters were driving home in the dusk of the evening, they met a couple of farmers returning from Port Rowen, after hauling a load of grain to market. They had paid their respects to the various taverns along the road, till they were in that condition in which the plebeian considers himself a king. There was nothing they dare not do, these erstwhile quiet plodders after the plow. As they were approaching the hunting-party, one was seen to slap the other familiarly on the back, and then both laughed uproariously. When they were alongside, they pulled up their team, and exclaimed:

"How'll you trade horses?"

Prosper, who was driving, stopped his horses with apparent reluctance.

"Oh, I don't know's we want to trade," he said. At the same time he glanced quickly at the other team, and remembered having seen the horses many times before. He knew what they were worth without examining them closely.

"Which of you owns this team?" asked one of the farmers, who had already jumped out of the wagon and was looking at the horses.

"I own the off horse, and this man"—pointing to Bonaventure—"owns the nigh one. You'd best stump him for a trade."

Prosper's horse was by far the better-looking animal, and besides, he seemed a likely mate for the off horse in the other wagon.

"No," said the farmer, "I don't want his horse. What kind of a dicker will you give me for that nigh one of mine?"

"I don't care to trade my horse off just now," said Prosper, with apparent unconcern. "He doesn't look very well, and I don't want to trade him on that account."

"How old is he?" asked the farmer, viewing the horse with increasing admiration.

"He's seven years old last spring."

"Seventeen, you mean," said the other in a bluffing way, inspired by whisky, and a horse-trade.

"If you can't believe what I tell you, we'd best quit right here," and Prosper made a pretense of starting up his team.

"Hold on, now," said the farmer, stopping him. "Don't git your back up so quick. A man can say what he likes in a horse-deal, can't he? Come, now, how'll you trade?"

"I tell you my horse doesn't look well, and I don't want to trade. If he looked all right, I wouldn't mind talkin' with you."

"Never mind the looks; I don't care anything about that. I'll give you an even dicker for that nigh horse."

"Oh no you don't," said Prosper, with a great deal of self-assurance. "I didn't suppose there was any use talkin' trade to you when you first stumped me."

"Well, I'll give you \$5 to boot."

"You want me to make you a present of this horse, don't you?"

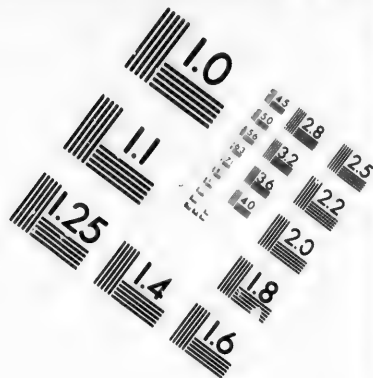
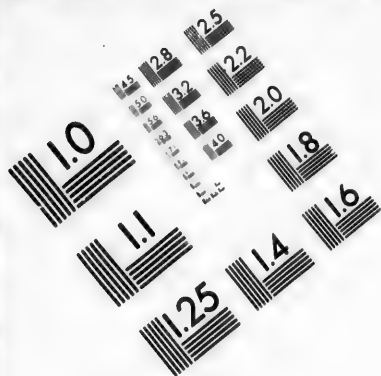
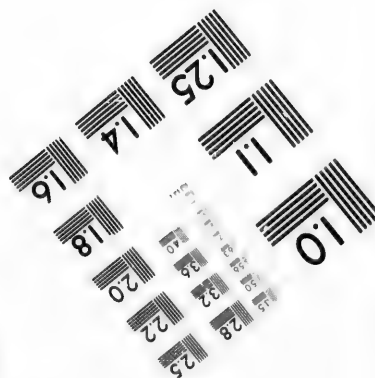
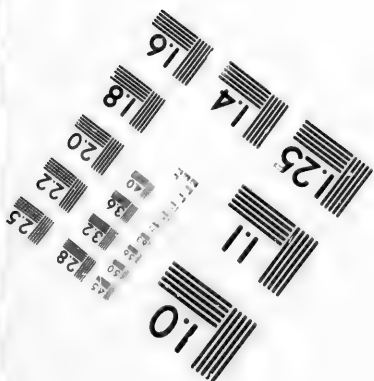
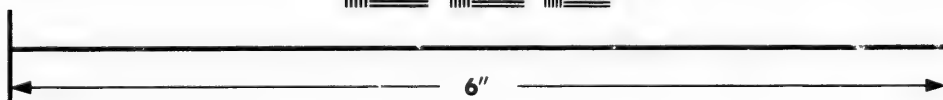
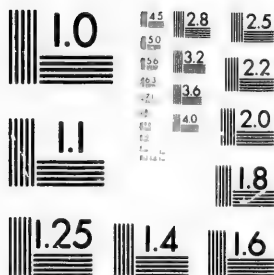


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"Well, how much boot *do* you want?"

"How much'll you give?"

"I'll give you \$10, and not a cent more."

"Then you can't trade horses with me," and he once more gathered up the lines as if to start.

"Hold on here," said the farmer, growing more anxious for the horse all the while. "Why don't you say how much you'll take?"

"Twenty dollars."

"I won't give it."

"All right; no harm done. I knew all along you hadn't \$20 to your name. You're a likely horse-trader, you are."

The hunter's wagon slowly began to rumble away. The farmer's blood was up—mixed somewhat with bad whisky. Prosper's horse looked better to him the farther away he got. His own seemed stunted and undergrown to his bleary eyes. And then that bluff about the money. He had sold a load of grain that day, and had a great deal more than \$20 in his pocket.

"Hold on," he cried, in defiance. "I can buy your whole outfit."

"If you're sure you've got \$20 with you, I'll trade horses," said Prosper, coolly.

"Unhitch your team, then. Wait a minute. Maybe that horse won't go on the nigh side."

"He'll go on one side as well as the other," Prosper assured him. "It doesn't make a bit of difference to him which way he goes."

By the time the exchange was made it was dark; and the hunters drove on toward home with little remark. Two members of the party especially were quiet, and apparently absorbed in their own reflections. Barlow

and old B'gob-sir had neither one acted naturally since they came to camp together.

Presently Philander remarked: "What's the matter with you two fellers to-night? I never seen B'gob-sir still so long before, and as for Barlow, why, he ain't a bit like himself. What ails you, Barlow?"

Barlow shook himself out of his meditation, and removing his pipe from between his teeth—it had long since gone out—he knocked the ashes on the side-board of the wagon, and spitting out into the ditch, began:

"Well, I didn't intend to say anything about it, but I've had a mighty bad shaking-up to-day. I come across something over a little to the west of Fraser's Creek that makes my hair almost stand to think about it."

Philander and Bonaventure were instantly on the alert, and as for B'gob-sir, he began to stare at Barlow with a quizzical, peculiar expression on his face.

"I struck out this morning over that way," Barlow continued, "expecting that if a deer got past you fellows I'd get a shot at him as he made for the creek. After tramping around for a long time, I heard Mose giving tongue away to the northwest, and I started north as hard as I could run, to try to head them off before they reached the creek. I was tearing along through the bushes at a great rate, when all at once I came upon something that nearly scared the wits out of me."

"What was it like?" asked Prosper, whose contemplation of his new horse had prevented him from being greatly interested till now.

"Well, I suppose you'll all laugh at me, but I'm going to tell you just what I saw, as nearly as I can." And then he repeated the description that Philander had

given of the wild man that night in front of Bonaventure's cabin. Philander and Bonaventure exchanged occasional glances as well as the darkness would permit, and B'gob-sir appeared strangely agitated and nervous.

"At first," said Barlow, "I was positive it was some kind of a queer animal—"

"Of course it was an *animal*," broke in B'gob-sir, no longer able to contain himself. The men all looked at him, and asked in a chorus:

"How do you know? Did you see it?"

"See it! Should think I did," exclaimed the excited old fellow. "It chased me across fourteen townships! See it! Why, God-a-mighty, it was the most turriblest lookin' thing a man ever set eyes on! You don't ketch me over in that neck o' the woods again, let me tell you."

There were two men in the wagon who could not resist a laugh, though the laugh in each case was impelled by a different reflection. Philander remembered the old fellow's braggadocio that night at Bonaventure's, and Barlow called to mind the circumstance of his meeting with B'gob-sir that afternoon.

"I thought you was goin' over to ferret this thing out for me," said Philander.

B'gob-sir remained dumb.

"So you think it was an animal?" observed Barlow. "Well, I don't agree with you. I just caught a glimpse of it at first, and it certainly looked like one, but I followed it up, and saw it several times after that, and an animal doesn't run on two feet the way it did. I was bound to see all I could of it, and instead of it chasing me"—here he looked rather comically at the hostler—

"I chased it. I tramped around that woods nearly half the day, trying to get closer to it, but I finally lost track of it, and had to give it up. I'm positive, though, that it's a human being of some sort."

"How did you two men come to meet each other this afternoon?" asked Jerry, who had been trying to put this and that together.

"I'll let B'gob-sir tell that," said Barlow, who was instantly on the point of a laugh.

"Well," said the old fellow, "after I shot at the deer this morning—say, that gun you borrowed for me isn't worth the powder to blow it up; you couldn't strike the side of a straw-stack with it if you stood two feet away and shoved the muzzle right into the straw. It jest simply lost us two or three deer to-day, and I don't want you fellers ever to play such a trick on me again."

"You had your pick of the guns," interposed Philander, "and that was the only one you would take. Bonaventure shot the buck with the gun you said was no good."

"That's all right, now; I didn't start out to talk particularly about guns, and if I'm goin' to tell this story, I wish you'd let me alone. Well, after the deer passed me—now I jest want to say right here that there isn't a man in the hull party that could 'a' shot them deer the way they was goin'. They'd got kinder tired out by the time they'd run as fur as Jerry, and that give him some kind of a show, but when they passed me they was jest simply flyin'. I shot straight enough, there wasn't any doubt about that, for I went over and seen where the shot struck a beech-tree, and it was jest about the right height for a deer; but the animal was

runnin' so fast the shot hadn't time to travel that distance before it was out of the way. I can tell you, though," he added, boastfully, "that if the deer had got that load of buck-shot in his carcass he'd never jumped another jump. It was a terror the way that tree was chewed up."

"I thought you said the gun was no good," said Philander.

B'gob-sir stared at the speaker, and relapsed into a moody silence.

"Go on with your story," said Barlow.

"Well, after that," he finally continued, "I went off down in the woods to see if I could git some kind of a decent shot, and I—well, there's no use in me takin' time to tell you where all I went, but—"

"Do you know yourself?" asked Jerry.

This was too much for the hostler.

"There! that settles it," he exclaimed. "I ain't goin' to say another word. That settles it. If a man can't tell a story without bein' interrupted every second word, it's about time to quit talkin'."

"Oh, never mind Philander and Jerry," said Barlow, who had good reasons of his own for wishing to see how the old fellow's story would terminate. "Never mind what they say. Tell us the rest of it."

"Well, they've got to keep quiet, that's all," he answered, with a shake of his head. Being assured that they would, he continued:

"I'd been trampin' round quite a spell and got tired, and after awhile I come near the edge of the clearin' and thought I'd set down on a log to rest. I hadn't been settin' there long when I heard something down in the bushes, and thinks I 'that's a deer, and I'll give

my gentleman a dose of lead.' I set there quiet with my gun on my knee, watchin' the direction of the noise, and all at once this—this—this thing that Barlow tells you about come slashin' through the bushes right toward me. I kinder moved on out into the clearin', so as to git a better look at it, for I couldn't make out what it was through the bushes, and jest as I'd nicely got out into the open space Barlow come along, and we started home."

The rather tame ending of B'gob-sir's story, and the uncertain inflection of voice, gave rise to some suspicion as to its accuracy. Barlow, especially, was much amused, and could not resist a question or two.

"How did you come to throw away your gun and start to streak it across the field so fast? If it hadn't been for me you'd have left your gun there yet."

"Well, now, I'll tell you the facts about the gun," said the old fellow, once more in trouble, but still undaunted. "I jest thought, as you said a few minutes ago, that the thing *might* be human, and I was so tempted to shoot it that I thought the only safe way was to throw away my gun. A feller never knows what foolish things he may do if he has a gun in his hand."

"Yes, but what about the two bears? You said you had just been chased out of the woods by a couple of bears."

"Oh, that's all right about the bears. I had to tell you something, and I was bound you shouldn't go down in there and git a glimpse of that—that thing if I could help it. I knew jest how it would frighten you; and then it was time we was startin' for camp."

Barlow spared him the recital of the true state of

affairs when he found him. The truth was that on his way to the camp he was attracted by a series of the most unearthly yells that ever came from human throat, and emerging into the small clearing he saw our veracious friend running at top speed, without hat or gun, and with hair aloft and eyes protruding, emitting the while a plaintive wailing, half yell, half cry. He was in a state of terror bordering on collapse, and Barlow had some difficulty in quieting him. It was only after they were within sight of the wagon that he left off turning around and looking back every few steps.

After all there can be little wonder that he was frightened, for he had been much unnerved by being lost in the woods, and had wandered off in that direction without the slightest idea where he was, till rescued by Barlow after his fright.

As the hunters' wagon rumbled slowly over the brow of a hill, an occasional feeble light here and there flickering from a candle showed them that they were near the Nonquon village, and the only remark of note was made by Bonaventure, who stated that without delay a party must be organized to go over in that region and learn something more definite about the wild man.

XII.

THE SEQUEL TO A HORSE-TRADE.

BEFORE noon the following day two events occurred at the Nonquon as the direct result of the hunt and the horse-trade.

Philander was walking aimlessly along the village street, with his hands deep in his trousers pockets and his pipe at a convenient angle between his teeth, when suddenly he stopped, took his pipe from his mouth, and looking intently up the road broke into a delighted exclamation at something he saw coming toward the village.

"Well, by gracious! if there ain't Mose, sure's preachin'. That dog is worth a farm this minute. Here, old fellow, come over here." he shouted, as the hound came loping toward him, with tongue hanging out and a generally tired air, as if he had gone a long chase. Mose jumped across the ditch in answer to the call, and Philander, in his exuberance, caught him up and carried him in his arms to the store door, where he called out to Prosper:

"Here you are. Here's Mose safe and sound. You ought to be proud of that dog, for he's made of the best kind o' stuff ever was put in a pup. And you can thank your lucky stars that it was an honest man who shot the deer in front of him, too, or you'd never seen your dog again."

"That's so," said Prosper. "If it had been most men they'd have kept both dog and deer."

"Well, you can afford to let them have the deer, since they've sent Mose home."

"Yes, the deer wouldn't amount to much anyhow after running so many hours. Guess Jerry 'll wish he'd taken my offer when he sees Mose is back. I can tell you that no man is goin' to lose much by takin' up any offer I make him."

This was said with a Sunday-school air, which not only grated on Philander's ear, but which was belied the next moment by the appearance of the farmer with whom the store-keeper had traded horses the previous evening. He drove up in front of the store with the horse he had got from Prosper, and jumping out of his wagon, asked in an aggressive tone:

"Where's that horse of mine?"

"It looks as if you had him hooked up there in that wagon," coolly answered Prosper.

"Oh, you know what I mean. I want the horse you beat me out of last night."

"Beat you out of?"

"Yes, beat me out of—that's plain enough, isn't it?"

"Not quite plain enough for me. I don't know what you're drivin' at."

"Don't, hey? You're mighty blind all at once; but you ain't quite so blamed blind as that old plug of a horse you sneaked off onto me. Go and look at his eyes, and see what you have to say for yourself."

"Oh, I've seen 'em before," carelessly remarked the store-keeper.

"Well, what are you goin' to do about it?"

"Nothin'."

"Nothin'! Do you mean to say you're goin' to cheat a man out of his horse by such a low-down lyin' trick as that?"

"Now I *don't* know what you're drivin' at. I hain't done no lyin' nor cheatin' that I know of."

"Do you mean to tell me that you didn't know that horse was blind?"

"Why of course I knew he was blind."

"Then what did you trade him to me for?"

"Because you wanted him."

"Well, but I didn't want him if he was blind."

"You didn't tell me that."

"You didn't tell me he was blind. A man that'll—"

"Hold on there; hold on jest a minute. Don't be too sure about that. You couldn't 'a' been payin' close attention to what I was sayin' last night. Don't be too certain I didn't tell you."

"Tell me! You never said a word about him being blind from the beginning of the deal to the end. I guess I know what—"

"Hold on, now; keep cool jest a little spell, till you've had time to think. Mebbe I *didn't* exactly mention the word blind; ain't quite sure that I *did*, now I come to think about it, but I put the thing in such a shape that a man with his wits about him might have known what was meant. I didn't suppose you was anybody's fool. I told you two or three times that the horse didn't *look* well, and that I didn't care to trade him on that account. I tried to git you to trade for the other horse, but you wouldn't have it. You said you didn't care how my horse *looked*. I jest simply give you your own way, and now you ain't satisfied."

The man saw the trap into which he had fallen, and

inwardly cursed two things—the individual who had duped him and the whisky which had rendered him susceptible of being duped. Prosper, it is probable, had been the object of similar imprecations on like occasions before, and it is only a matter of history that this is not the first instance where whisky has been held as an accomplice when arraigned in the court of sober reflection at its session of “the next morning.”

“Well, that’s what I call worse than lyin’,” bitterly observed the farmer. “Any decent man will have a little respect for what he says, even in a horse-trade.”

“Oh, you’ve changed your mind since last night. That wasn’t what you said then. I remember you told me that ‘a man can say what he likes in a horse-deal, can’t he?’ Simply takin’ you at your own word, don’t you see? And yet, as I said before, you ain’t satisfied.”

“No, I ain’t satisfied. I want to know how you’ll trade back. I can’t do anything with that old blind-eye out there.”

“Well, if you can’t do anything with him, what do you s’pose I could do with him?” asked Prosper, with a rather cunning twinkle.

“You might trade him off to some other darn fool who was half-full of whisky,” answered the farmer, with bitter sarcasm. This evidently put an idea into Prosper’s head. He looked out at the horse standing in front of his store. He was certainly a fine appearing animal.

“Well, how do you want to trade back?” he finally asked.

“That’s just what I asked you.”

“But I didn’t answer it, did I?”

“No, I noticed that.”

"Well, notice it once more. The propersition must come from you this time. I told you last night how I'd trade, and now it's for you to say how you'll trade back."

"I paid you \$20 to boot last night, didn't I?"

Prosper nodded his head indifferently.

"Well, you give me \$15 of that back and take your horse, and I'll take mine. You never made \$5 easier."

The store-keeper was leaning carelessly against the counter, and when the farmer made this proposition he looked off out of the window and began whistling some slow air in a quiet, subdued tone, as if oblivious to everybody around him. The farmer looked at him intently, and commenced to get uneasy.

"So you won't do it, hey?" he ventured.

Prosper slowly shook his head, still looking out of the window.

"Well, what *will* you do, then?" asked the farmer, somewhat desperately.

"You're makin' the propersitions this time," was the cool reply.

"All right; you can keep \$10 of the boot money, then."

Another slow shake of the head.

"Well, for God's sake take \$15 of it, then! Swindle me right out of \$15 if you want to. Shove your hand down into a man's pocket and steal \$15 out of it, just because you've got a good chance. Will that do you? Will \$15 do you?"

Prosper began to arrange some plugs of tobacco on the shelf behind him, whistling the same slow tune.

"What in thunder do you mean, anyhow?" stormed the farmer. "Ain't you goin' to take the \$15?"

A slower shake of the head than ever, without turning from the tobacco.

The farmer looked at him for a moment, and then, suddenly wheeling around, told him to "go to —," and went out, slamming the door viciously. He drove across the road to Jerry's tavern, and tying the horse, disappeared in the bar-room.

"He'll git drunk, and then come back here and abuse me, I s'pose," was Prosper's uncomfortable reflection. But while the store-keeper's reasoning certainly appeared plausible, it turned out amiss this time, for the farmer had not much more than entered the tavern when he came out again, and walking across the street, approached Prosper in a more subdued manner.

"No use talkin'," he said. "You've got the bulge on me, and I suppose I'll have to put up with it. You can keep the whole \$20. Let's change horses and be done with it. It's pretty tough to throw away \$20, but I can't take that blind horse home with me, again."

"Tell you what I'll do," said Prosper, leaning over, with his elbows on the counter. "Tell you what I'll do. I'll trade back all right, seein' you will have it that way, but you must leave that harness on the blind horse and hitch your horse up in my harness. You see that harness fits the blind horse at present, and I've fitted my harness to your horse, so it'll save takin' up and lettin' out a good deal."

"Well, but I can't do that," expostulated the farmer. "That is a brand-new harness that I bought at Port Rowen yesterday, while yours is an old one. I'll fit the horses myself. You needn't bother about that."

"Well, *you* needn't bother about it either," said Prosper, significantly.

The farmer looked at him in a queer way. "So you won't trade back without the harness thrown in?"

"Not exactly thrown in," said Prosper. "We trade harness as well as horses, that's all."

A peculiar light came into the farmer's eye—not altogether a pleasant light. "All right," he said, simply, "go to the stable and harness my horse, while I unhitch this one from the wagon."

As Prosper saw the blind horse led into the stall with a new harness on, he felt quite well disposed toward the world generally, but the farmer had not driven away many rods when he was hailed by the store-keeper, who exclaimed:

"Hold on! Come back here with my harness, you rascal! You've cut this harness all up, and I won't have it."

"You was bound to have it a few minutes ago, and now you've got it," answered the farmer with the first pleased look on his face he had exhibited that day.

"Yes, but you have ruined it with your jack-knife, and I'll have you arrested if you don't—"

"You'll have to prove that I cut it first," sang out the farmer, derisively, driving away all the while, and grinning back in a taunting manner at Prosper.

"You're a scoundrel!" cried Prosper.

"Scoundrel would be a pet name for you," said the farmer. "If that harness doesn't suit you, just buy another with that \$20 you swindled me out of."

"I'd rather be a swindler than a sneak," yelled Prosper.

"I'd rather be a sneak than a hypocrite and liar," shouted the farmer.

"You're both of 'em yourself," shrieked Prosper.

"You're all four put together," was the retort. "Throw you into a pot and boil you down and there'd be nothing left but a mass of meanness and bad grease."

"I'd like to hang your hide on a barn door to dry and then use it for a target," was the soothing response.

"There wouldn't be enough of your hide left to shoot at if I got hold of you," came the comforting reply.

And with these tender compliments the distance grew too great for even the highly pitched voices to travel, and the belligerents had to content themselves with shakings of the head, and mutterings, and subdued threats.

XIII.

SEARCHING FOR THE WILD MAN.

ACCORDING to arrangements made after the deer hunt, Barlow Dreeme came out from Port Rowen the following week, and he and Bonaventure and Philander started in search of the wild man. B'gob-sir was invited to accompany them, but waived the invitation.

"You fellers can go nosin' off into that neck o' perdition if you want to, a lookin' for something you'll be sorry you found; but as fur's I'm concerned, enough's as good as a feast. Why, b'gob-sir, you don't know what you're thinking about. You'll all git lost in that mis'able jumpin'-off place, and even if you don't lose yourselves, you're li'ble to run across somethin' that'll scare the liver and lights right out of you. I tell you what it is, you hain't any idea what the blamed thing is like. It's somethin' more than an animal, and yet it ain't human by a long shot. I ain't nobody's fool, I want you to understand, and I've seen somethin' of the world, but I never run across anythin' that could touch one side of that thing for looks. You can go down there and tackle it all you like, but you don't take a man of the name of Brown with you."

It was decided by the men to go up one side of the creek and come back the other in their search. Philander had encountered the wild man on the east shore, and Barlow on the west, and they were therefore uncertain as to his exact whereabouts.

"Let's take in the west bank first," said Barlow, when they arrived at the creek, "and then if necessary we can cross over and come down this side. This shore is terribly rough, and anyhow I believe we'll find something on the other bank."

But his reckoning proved amiss. After a weary tramp of several hours along the west shore without result, they were forced to abandon their search in that direction and cross the river.

Bonaventure seemed disappointed. He had appeared more eager and excited than either of the others. "I don't believe we'll find anything," he ventured, when they were starting south along the east shore.

"If we don't it won't be because there's nothing here," said the other two, almost in a breath, and with much significance.

The men were working their way down into the thickest part of the undergrowth about a half-hour later, when Philander, who was ahead, suddenly stopped, and turning to one side picked up a stone twice the size of a man's fist. It was moss-covered on one side, and the other showed fresh from the earth where it had only recently been dislodged. He held it up to Bonaventure and Barlow with a meaning expression on his face.

"Oh, that might have been turned over by some animal," said Bonaventure.

"Not likely," said Barlow, looking intently at the stone.

"Especially," said Philander, "as it's been used to pound something with. Look here," he suddenly exclaimed, after examining the ground for some distance

around, "there's the big stone that's been used to pound against."

Sure enough, there lay a large stone, with the moss displaced, showing where something had been battered upon it.

"It's butternuts, that's what it is. Some one has been cracking butternuts with the two stones."

The three men looked at each other for a moment, and then without a word turned to pursue their search. They were more alert now, more expectant, and all three were excited. They pushed their way into difficult places, over fallen trees, through thick brush, always keeping as near the river as possible.

The air was chilly and the surroundings somber. Down in the depths of the ravine, through which the river ran, there was little stir of life, but upon the hillside a busy squirrel chattered in shrill notes, and a woodpecker thumped resoundingly at a hollow stub. A flock of crows cawed in the distance, an occasional outbreak among them seeming to indicate a lively debate over some matter of great importance—probably the advisability of a precipitate journey south to a warmer clime. The tall trees scattered here and there among the thicker brush sighed ominously, and one lordly old pine with a forked cedar lodged against him groaned at every sweep of the wind, as if weary of his burden.

"I don't wonder that pine-tree is tired holding that cedar up so long," observed Barlow, looking over to where the two trees came together. "See how the cedar has worn a deep groove on each side of the pine. It must be years since the cedar got lodged there."

"Yes, and it may hang on for years yet," observed Philander.

The men little imagined the part this forked cedar leaning against the pine had played, and was yet to play, in connection with the object of their search.

"Here's a beaten path—look you!" suddenly exclaimed Bonaventure, who seemed more intent on other matters than the phenomena presented by a couple of trees. "An animal, it may be," he added, examining the path; "but I hardly think so. In any event we'll follow it up."

Somehow Bonaventure's French instincts began to appear very vividly as he hurried along the winding path. He was unduly excited, and evidently labored under a straining suspense. One instant he was down on his knees closely scanning the indistinct foot-prints, the next he was vigorously pushing his burly form through the thick bushes, and glancing quickly before him in apparent anticipation of—something. In places the heavy brush formed a low archway over the path, as if the underbrush had been kept apart by repeated goings and comings. On account of the wild, rugged condition of the earth, the path wound hither and thither to avoid rocks, and knolls, and stumps, and partly fallen trees.

"This is a terrible spot," observed Barlow, as his hat was dragged off by a protruding limb.

"I can make nothing out of it—nothing at all out of it—it puzzles me," said Bonaventure, stopping long enough to wipe the perspiration from his broad brown forehead. "The path seems to go nowhere. It twists here, it twists there"—he was gesticulating in true French fashion—"but it comes to nothing. It must be an animal—but no"—slowly shaking his head, and bending down once more to examine the path—"that

isn't an animal. An animal makes no such a *regular* path."

"Yes they do," interposed Barlow and Philander, who were hunters. "Animals often make a perfectly beaten path."

"But you both said it *wasn't* an animal," suddenly turning and looking at them in a queer way.

The two men could scarcely fathom Bonaventure's peculiar agitation. In truth it was something that no one could fathom—not even Bonaventure himself.

"Well, we're not likely to find out what it is if we stand here," said Philander.

"Well, but, now, look you!" said Bonaventure, in an argumentative way. "What's the use? Here we've been looking and looking, and tramping and tramping, and no end to it all. What's the use?"

Philander and Barlow looked inquiringly at each other. What had so suddenly come over Bonaventure to make him hesitate just when their search promised something? They could not understand it. It looked as if he were afraid, and yet Bonaventure was no coward.

"Surely you don't want to give up the search and go home now, when there is some prospect of success. This path must lead somewhere, and I vote we follow it."

"Well, you go ahead," said the Frenchman, waving his big hand in the direction of the path. Then, seeing the expression on the faces of his companions, he broke out: "No, boys, I'm not afraid. It ain't that. I don't know what it is, but I ain't *afraid*. I never was afraid—but—I—I—feel queer, somehow. You go ahead."

Philander led the way. They had not gone far when

Bonaventure broke out again, after squeezing his bulky form between an upturned root and a large rock: "This is awful. Look what a place. Anything human to live in such a spot as this! Boys, you *sure* it was human? It *can't* be human."

"That's hard to say," said Barlow. "But anyhow you'll surely have as good a chance to judge as the rest of us before long. If we don't come across the thing itself, we'll find the place where it lives, if we keep on."

"Hello!" exclaimed Philander, who was a few steps in advance. "See here!" He had climbed up a steep incline of rock, along the sides of which rude steps were formed by natural indentations, and near the summit the path suddenly ended. A large flat stone marked the spot, and the men, after studying the situation, decided to move the stone. When pushed aside it revealed an opening leading into a dark cavern made by a cleft in the rock. The opening was nearly round, but so small that a man the size of Bonaventure could not have forced his body through. The edges of the rock on two sides were worn smooth, indicating the frequent passage of something in and out of the cave. The men peered cautiously into the opening, but could discern nothing in the darkness.

"I'm goin' to see what's in there, anyhow," said Philander, striking a light, and holding it into the mouth of the cavern.

"Well, if that ain't a picture!" he exclaimed, a moment later, withdrawing his head as the light went out. "That beats anything I ever seen in civilization. There's nothing alive in there, but there's more truck and dicker than you could shake a stick at in a month of Sundays. You jest keep watch on the outside here, and I'll go down and explore."

After forcing his way, with some difficulty, through the opening, he exclaimed:

"Why, it ain't so dark, after all, when you're once inside."

"Well, what do you see in there?"

"What *don't* I see? Better ask me that. I could answer it easier. Here's a lot of old bones cut and carved into the funniest shapes you ever saw, and stuck here and there all over the place. And here's some furs piled up in one corner. I wondered what had been at my traps along the creek for the last two or three years. And there's a piece of old yellow newspaper fastened to the side of the cave by runnin' a twig through it and pinnin' it into a crevice in the rock. Well, if that ain't—Good Lordy, what kind of readin' is this, anyhow? The paper is yellow enough to be a thousand years old, but for all that I could read it if—if it *was* readin'. But such a mixed-up mess of letters you never saw. What do you suppose this spells? 'C-h-a-q-u-e-t-t-e F-i-l-s'—"

"Never mind the paper; tell us what else is there," said Bonaventure, impatiently.

"Well, here's some dried meat, and an old sap-bucket, and nuts—why, there's nuts enough here to keep a bear eatin' ten years; hazel-nuts, beech-nuts and butter-nuts—loads of 'em. And an old flint-lock musket, made, I should say, about the time of the flood, a pattern I never saw before; and an odd kind of tobacco-pipe too. Bonaventure, you ought to have this. Doesn't look as if it had been smoked since the War of 1812."

"No," said Bonaventure, "I don't want it. Leave it there. What else?" he asked, greedy for further information.

"Oh, I don't know what all," answered Philander,

glancing around him curiously. "The walls of the cave are all marked with the queerest figures, as if the rock had been carved with some kind of a sharp instrument, probably a sharp-cornered flint-stone. But these nuts, you ought to see 'em—must be millions. Well, that's the snuggest little spot I've seen for many a day," he remarked, as he was climbing out. "I wouldn't mind livin' in there myself."

"Now the question comes as to the occupant," said Barlow.

"Yes, that's so, that's so; there *is* something, after all," remarked Bonaventure, half to himself.

The men were standing near the opening of the cave, and Philander had just replaced the stone, when Barlow, looking down toward the creek, remarked:

"Why, see; we're right opposite the big pine and the forked cedar. I had no idea they were in sight yet. That path must be terribly crooked."

Suddenly Bonaventure began to act strangely. He darted to one side, and stared down at the pine-tree, as if trying to see something on the other side of it. The cedar leaned against it from the opposite direction, and little of it could be seen except the forked portion.

"See! see! Quick! Look you! look you!" excitedly exclaimed the Frenchman, beckoning to the other two.

Hurrying to where he stood, Barlow and Philander saw scrambling down the inclined cedar the identical object that they had each encountered before in the woods.

"*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* This is dreadful. It *can't* be human. It *must* be human. Tell me, is *that* what you saw?" asked Bonaventure, turning to the others. They both nodded. Then the three, with a common

purpose, started quickly down the path toward the trees.

But when they arrived, all trace of the lively moving creature was lost, and search as they would, they could not again get track of it. It seemed to move so noiselessly through the bushes that not a sound was audible. What appeared more peculiar still was the fact that there was no distinguishable path leading up to the foot of the cedar, while the one they had followed to the cave had its distinct origin at that point. Clearly there was some connection between the cedar and the cave, but what it was they were unable to determine.

Night was approaching, and there was nothing left for the men but to abandon further investigation, for that day at least, and go home.

XIV.

PIERRE DUFRESNE.

WHEN the story had been told at Bonaventure's fireside that night, and the matter fully discussed, it was the general conclusion that little more could be done for the present to unravel the mystery.

"I've been away from the camp two days now inside of a week," said Bonaventure, "and the skidways are not filling up as fast as they should; so I must look sharp after my work. But, look you," he added, impressively, "we must know more about it. It must be tracked, and followed, and watched; and if necessary it must be caught. Anyhow, we must know more about it. It will never do—in this age—a human being—(it *must* be human)," he interposed to himself under his breath. "A human being to go like that—it will never do."

"Well now, let me tell you," broke in B'gob-sir, who had been waiting at the McGlorries since early in the evening to hear the report of the searching-party, "my opinion is that the best thing to do is to do nothing at all. What you goin' to do with it if you should catch it? That's what I'd like to know. You can't start a menagerie with it if it should turn out to be an animal, and you can't make a man of it if it should turn out to be a monkey, and you can't make nothin' at all out of it if it should turn out to be a man. Now what the dickens is the sense o' scarin' folks to death for nothin'?"

"Faith, and I think the same thing," said Mrs. McGlorrie, with much fervency. "I've allus been agin it. No earthly good can come of it, I can tell you that—traipsin' off like all possessed a meddlin' with things that's none of your affair."

"I don't see myself that much good can be accomplished by a further search," remarked Barlow.

"No," said Philander, looking into the fire, and speaking slowly, as if his mind were at a distance. "It *does* look as if it was foolish to follow it up—"

"Oh, you're all cowards, every one of you," snapped out Gabrielle, who had been listening intently. "That is, every one but father," she added, as he turned to look at her in some surprise at the outbreak. "I wish I was a man," partly to herself, but loud enough for her mother to catch it.

"Well now, just listen to that, will you? Gabrielle, you're out of all manner of reason with anything I ever seen in the shape of a girl. You're always taken up with something that's more befitted to hathens than to civilized bein's. There's them moccasins you brought home with you the other day from that dirty old Indian. I'll say this for him, though, I'd no idee he'd ever make 'em for you."

"So Andy brought you the moccasins, did he?" Philander remarked, with a smile. "I guess he wanted to keep his hide whole."

"Gabe," piped in Dennie—virtuous little Dennie, "next time you catch a fish, you'll git me a pair of moccasins, won't you?"

"There now, just listen to the boy," again broke out Mrs. McGlorrie. "Dinnie, it's your bed-time long ago. Off with you this minute. Moccasins indeed; and you

with as good a pair of boots as a boy ever had—red tops, copper toes, and all.”

Gabrielle watched her chance, and when no one noticed, she reminded Philander of his promise to take her up Fraser’s Creek some day.

“All right, Gabe, I’ll do it, if it scares you into fits.”

“I’ll risk the scare,” with a toss of her head and a curl of her lip.

“Gabe, you’re purtier when you try to be saccastic than you be any other time, and blamed if you ain’t purty any time.”

“Philander, I wouldn’t take that from another man on earth only you. I’d slap him in the face.”

“I believe you, Gabe.”

“Well, good-night. I like you all the better for saying it.”

“I believe you there again.”

“Go on, now; you’ll say too much if you ain’t careful.”

“Well, good-night.”

The next morning Bonaventure went over to the lumber-camp bright and early, and found all the men hard at work except one of his countrymen, Pierre Dufresne.

“Well, Pierre, what’s the matter this morning?” asked Bonaventure.

“Oh,” answered the Frenchman, with a woebegone countenance and a hand laid distressingly over his stomach, “I got a crank on my stom-meek.”

Pierre frequently had this same “crank,” and it was noticeable that it always came on just at a time when he was most needed in the woods. Moreover, the affection appeared peculiar from the fact that he was a singularly healthy and robust individual in appearance;

and no matter how severe the "crank" happened to be Pierre could be counted on to do double duty at meal-time.

"What's wrong with Pierre?" asked one of the under foremen of Bonaventure, as he was walking across the yard to the camp.

"Oh, he's got a 'crank' again," replied Bonaventure, with a screwing up of his face and a mock solicitation which was not without its humorous effect.

"Why don't you sack that lazy dog, Bonaventure?"

The foreman simply shrugged his shoulders, and said, evasively:

"Oh, I don't know."

"Guess it's because he's a Frenchman, isn't it?"

"Mebbe it is—I don't know—mebbe it is."

Pierre was a married man, and lived with his wife in a small log cabin near the main camp. "My waf she lak to wash, you see," he always said, with an apologetic grin, to any one who chanced to see her at her usual avocation of bending over the tubs.

"Like to wash indeed; yes, I'm sure any one would like such work as this," was Mrs. Dufresne's testy rejoinder. "Straining a body's life and soul out every day tryin' to get these shantymen's clothes clean; and then only paid enough to barely buy bread and potatoes, when a lazy shirk of a husband does nothing but eat them. I don't like this work any more than you like rollin' logs in the woods, but I don't wiggle out of it as often as you do."

Pierre always took these tirades with a good-humored grin. "My waf, you see, she has her tongue, mebbe—but then, all the same, she lak to work."

It was a way he had of easing a rather sleepy con-

science to insist that his wife preferred labor to rest. As for himself, he had a lively appreciation of the comforts of life, with an exaggerated aversion to the discomforts. He would smack his lips with satisfaction over a drink of cool spring-water, but never could see the philosophy of taking a pail to the spring and carrying the water himself. He was fond of finery of the flashy, shoddy sort, and doted on a new woolen sash, highly colored, as a boy would over a brilliant toy. He had a way all his own of tying his sash, and while the other shantymen were content with winding theirs around them and giving them a careless twist, for the practical purpose of holding them in place, Pierre always took great pains to see that his had a nicely turned knot precisely in front of him, and that the tasseled ends were brought around to his right hip, tucked under the belt and carefully spread out to make the most elaborate display. Underwear, as the term is usually understood, was little indulged in by the shantymen. If one pair of trousers was not warm enough, two pairs were worn, the larger drawn over the smaller. Usually one pair was too old and tattered to be worn in any other way, and this fact led Pierre to revolt against the practice; so he accordingly mustered the means to buy himself a regulation pair of drawers. The problem now was to let his friends know of his acquisition. In his own mind he had risen vastly in social rank the moment a new pair of drawers lay concealed beneath his trousers, but the very fact that they were concealed worried him. He went around among the men all day when he first put them on, with this load on his mind. He thought at one time of contriving in some way to make a slit in his trousers on the limb of a tree, and

thus expose his drawers, but the awful thought flashed across him that he might accidentally tear the drawers. Sitting moodily by the fire in the evening, revolving the thing in his mind, he startled the men around him by suddenly slapping his thigh with his hand, and enthusiastically exclaiming: "Das my trawzers, *avec my drawers! By golly, she's warm!*"

"Pierre," said Bonaventure the next morning after the "crank," "I guess the only way to get any work out of you is to let you drive a team. You can hitch up the kedge team and go down to Port Rowen after provisions."

Pierre was delighted. There was little work about this, and he could manage to throw a great deal of importance into the position. He soon had his team decorated with cheap ribbon, though to speak literally the horses did not suffer from over-grooming. Before he had been a week in charge of the team he had assumed a proprietorship in them that was ludicrous. "Das de bes' team I ever draw a lang. Af any man ax me what I take for dat team, I ax 'em right off, I shan't touch it."

"Pierre will own the whole camp before the winter is half over if he keeps on," laughingly observed a shantyman to three or four comrades as they listened to this remark.

"There's one thing he won't own, though, if he doesn't look out," said another. "He will have to turn over a new leaf, or he won't own his wife very long. That woman'll leave him sure, and I wouldn't blame her a bit if she did. She's supported him ever since they was married."

"Leave him! Not much she won't. You don't know

what you're talkin' about. A woman will stick to a great lazy lunkhead of a fop like him and work her finger-ends off, but let a decent, plain, hard-handed sort of a fellow come along and she'll stick up her nose at him. Oh, d——n the wimmen! I hain't no use for 'em."

This latter remark was expressed with such bitter significance that it is possible the speaker had passed through some personal experience which had warped his ideas of such matters; and if the history of all shantymen were known, it might be found that many of them had drifted into this kind of life as the result of misunderstandings which, if we are permitted to estimate the possibilities of human happiness, never should have occurred.

XV.

AN OLD-TIME REVIVAL.

AUTUMN has passed rather abruptly into winter, and winter in the region about the Nonquon means something. It means snow for one thing, great broad fields of it, knee-deep at first, and growing deeper at each successive storm, till sometimes it reaches two, or even three, feet on the level. It means cold, clear, crisp weather, which makes the trees in the woods snap with the frost, and sends the blood tingling through the cheeks. Of course there is a frozen ear now and then, or a frozen nose, or even a frozen finger; but there is also a clear atmosphere, through which a peal of laughter will ring for a long distance, and echo back other peals. The sleigh-bells—best music of all—jingle from morning till night, and then far into the night, accompanied by the squeak of runners over frozen snow. In the early morning a dense mist comes from the breath—sometimes thick enough to be mistaken for tobacco-smoke—filling the shaggy beards of the shantymen with frost and icicles. The days are short, so that long before daylight and long after dark the shantymen are waking the echoes among the tall pines with their shouts and songs. It is the happiest season around the Nonquon.

Mrs. McFarlane's "tar-neeps" are long since safely housed, the foxes which so ruthlessly stole her pullets are pretty well shot off, and the old "soo" is in her

winter quarters. The only disturbing reflections which affect the widow are that Donald will persist in taking his team to the shanty to work, and that it is a poor time of the year for potash kettles.

Old B'gob-sir potters around Jerry's tavern with immense ear-laps sewed to his cap and tied under his chin, and his feet encased in mammoth moccasins.

Prosper Tryne is in his element, for this is the season of "protracted meetin'," and if there is anything which Prosper really excels in it is "exhortin'" at these meetings.

This winter there was a new preacher on the circuit, with headquarters at Port Rowen, and he proposed holding his first revival at the Nonquon, that being one of his appointments which seemed most in need of such work. He was a young unmarried man, and this was his first charge. He was honest, and in earnest, and when he announced one Sunday after his sermon that a week from the following Monday nightly services would be held "for the purpose of reclaiming lost souls to Jesus," there was a flutter of expectancy on the part of the little congregation. "I feel doubly reinforced for this work," he said, "from the fact that I see so great a necessity for it in your midst, and also from the fact that I have so able an assistant in Brother Tryne. I sincerely hope and pray that our labors will result in a bountiful harvest being reaped in this vineyard of the Lord."

When B'gob-sir heard of the coming revival, he remarked: "Well, Prosper prob'ly won't trade horses much in the next few weeks. That's one blessin' in advance."

"You'll change your tune about Prosper when you

hear him exhortin' a little while," said one of the bystanders. "Mr. Springle may be a good devoted preacher, but when it comes to fetchin' folks up to the penitent bench, I don't believe he can touch one side of Prosper."

"That's so," said Philander Hunt, who overheard the remark. "I think I'd 'a' been converted long ago by Prosper if I hadn't seen anything of him only what I've seen in protracted meetin'. He does make a person feel for the time that everything in this world is goin' to turn out blacker'n a thunder-cloud unless you come up to that bench."

"Well now," blurted out the hostler, "I don't think I'll change my tune any, because I don't intend to go and hear him. Why, b'gob-sir, the minute I'd see him beginning to put on a sanctimonious face I'd feel like gittin' up and spittin' right at him. I'd do it too—blamed if I wouldn't."

"Oh no you wouldn't," said Gabrielle, who happened to be passing as he made the remark. "You'd be blubberin' first thing you knew, and wipin' your eyes on your coat-sleeve."

"There now, I—" But the crowd laughed at him so that he wheeled and walked off in high dudgeon toward the tavern.

The first night of the revival there were few faces seen in the little low school-house where the services were held except those of the regular congregation. The most conspicuous figures were the Widow Farley, who was always on hand to lead the singing; Mrs. Tryne, who occupied a seat near the front; her husband, who held the post of honor beside the minister; Mrs. McGlorrie, who had always been a consistent member

of the church except when she had the row with Mrs. McFarlane over the turnips, and who, by the way, must look forward, as these services went on, to a great struggle with herself in order to develop contrition enough to forgive the Scotch woman; and several others of lesser note in the neighborhood. The meetings had not yet begun to draw people from a distance, or, as B'gob-sir irreverently remarked: "They hadn't got steam up yet."

The Rev. Mr. Springle preached a short sermon, dwelling principally on the great good that might be expected from the gathering together of even a few, provided they had gathered in the proper spirit. He appealed to those present to consecrate their best efforts to the service of the Lord during the coming revival, and wound up by saying:

"We will now sing a hymn, and while this is being sung we invite all those who are anxious to serve the Lord to come forward and mingle with us around the altar."

The Widow Farley started the tune in her highly pitched, squeaky voice, and one by one the old members stepped sedately forward and ranged themselves along the bench placed for penitents. After each verse the minister repeated the invitation to come forward, but got no response after the first. When the singing was done, he said:

"I am sorry to see so many hanging back and showing so much hesitation—I might say indifference—where a matter of so great importance is at stake. We will now have a short season of prayer, led by Brother Tryne."

The first real enthusiasm of the meeting began. That prayer was a revelation to the Rev. Amos Sprin-

gle, who had never heard Prosper pray at revival before. His regular, every-day, ordinary prayer was nothing to this. There was something about the atmosphere of a protracted meeting which inspired Prosper to a degree of enthusiasm that he could not muster on other occasions. He started out in slow, measured tones, pitched rather low, but with an air of confidence that he had the subject well in hand. Soon he began to warm up, and the devout ones commenced to shout "Amen!" at proper intervals. As Prosper's voice arose, his body began to sway backward and forward, and his hands to go up and down. The little school-house rang with his strong, resonant voice, interspersed with sighings, and groanings, and moanings from the distressed congregation. The Spirit was moving among them in rhythm with the intensity of the prayer, and when the grand final outburst of frenzy had come, and the words had died down to a breathless "Amen," it left them in a seething tempest of emotion over their drear and sin-sick state. That prayer was typical of the series of meetings held that winter at the Nonquon, in fact typical of almost every country revival of those days. They started rather quietly and sedately, and the excitement rose with the progress of the revival and the increased emotion of the participants, till finally the scenes at the last few meetings could be compared to nothing short of bedlam.

It was several nights before a really new convert was secured. Some of the backsliders had been reclaimed, and the small circle around the altar commenced to grow as a consequence. Old Jonas Wicklow, who lived just over the hill to the south, began to show symptoms of indulging in one of his periodical conversions. He

went forward every winter as regularly as the winter came, and at the close of each revival he was one of the most contrite and promising converts. During the following February and March he was certain to attend services regularly, and always remained to "class-meetin'." Along in April he began to neglect class-meeting, sometimes sauntering out at the close of the regular services. In May he did not always attend regular services, and by the end of June he remained home oftener than he went. July might fairly be estimated as the limit, for after that he was never seen at church till the next revival.

Some of the younger backsliders took the matter more to heart, and suffered a true repentance; but the greatest rejoicing was when a new convert made his trembling journey to the bench.

Miles Tryne had never professed religion, and was on this account an enigma to many of the church people, who could not understand how a young man surrounded, as he was, by religious influences could fail to seek conversion. Old B'gob-sir met their argument with his usual logic.

"Why, b'gob-sir, it's jest because he knows his father, that's all. He has seen too much of religion to make him want any of it."

But the hostler failed to conceive the fact that there comes a time in the life of every young man—and young woman too, for that matter—when the individual is more impressionable than ever before, and that time had arrived with Miles. He assumed a more serious air as the revival progressed, and soon attention was closely drawn to him. One evening the members centered their energies to induce him to "bear the cross."

One after another of the leading spirits approached him, and whispered in his ear the awful state his soul was in while out of Christ. He seemed to waver. It is a difficult move for a young man to make, in the face of his companions. His mother was praying for him, while his father stood inside of the altar adding a general exhortation to the special pleading of the others. The young man was painfully distressed. The world, the flesh, and the devil never assumed such a terrible shape to him before. His past life was made to look like a horrible dream—a blind voyage upon quicksands and troublous waters. There was only one way out. The Rev. Mr. Springle himself walked down the aisle, and laid his hand gently on the young man's shoulder, and talked to him in serious tones. Miles began to tremble—the first sure symptom of a breaking away. The mingled voices rose and fell with the excitement of the moment, and every heart beat high in suspense as to the probable outcome. Attention was concentrated on the two young men, the one standing with bowed head and quivering face, the other pleading earnestly in his ear. Miles tightly gripped the back of the seat in front of him. There was a terrific tempest in his mind. The first step was so hard to take. He almost determined to remain where he was. He heard the din of the voices around him. He heard the minister talking in low tones, but was too confused to know what he said. In a partial lull he heard his mother sobbing, and in an instant he had turned and was pushing the minister before him in his haste to get to the bench, where he fell prostrate on his knees, with tears streaming down his face. A loud chorus of "Hallelujahs," mingled with an occasional fervent

"Glory to God!" marked the journey from the back seat to the bench, and the young man was soon surrounded by praying brothers and sisters anxious to pilot his soul into the sought-for rest.

An event had happened. The first important conversion of the revival had taken place, and a new impulse was thus given to the work. It created a mild sensation around the neighborhood, and advertised the meetings.

"Have you been down to the pert'acted meetin' yet?"

"No. Have you?"

"No. I heard they got Miley Tryne last night. Guess I'll have to go down and see what's goin' on."

"Yes. Guess I'll have to go too."

This was a typical conversation among some of the outsiders who never attended meetings except with a view to finding out "what was goin' on." A prominent convert was about equal in those days to a big elephant in the circus as a drawing-card.

Mr. Springle soon discovered that no matter how earnest he might be in his exhortation, he could not move the crowd like Prosper, whose magnetic influence with the people overshadowed for the moment any suspicions they might have as to his daily life. The minister therefore turned over this part of the service to the store-keeper, and Prosper, impressed with the importance of his mission, threw an energy and pathos into the work which astonished even those who had heard him in previous years. As they sat and listened to his fervent appeals they forgot that he ever traded horses, or cut a yard of calico an inch too short.

The revival progressed, and nearly a dozen new con-

verts were secured. Some were mere children, too young by many years to realize in the slightest degree the import of the step they were taking. People attended from all parts. Even the shantymen came down from Beaver Meadow Point in squads of six or eight. They came "for the fun of the thing." Pierre was of the number. He was boisterous and jolly on the way down the first night. Going home he was more quiet. The second night he was not so jolly, even on his way down. The third night he became converted. The fourth night he was the most highly elated of all the converts, and declared that life had never been worth living till now. He was in an ecstasy of delirium, and grew even more enthusiastic in his demonstrations than Prosper himself. His religion held out through the revival, and for one Sunday after it, but failed to hold out any longer. He was more fickle even than Jonas Wicklow.

The meetings were drawing to a close. The climax was nearing, and yet there were two persons who had been made the special objects of prayer, but who so far had resisted. They were the two persons of all others around the Nonquon upon whose conversion the church members had set their hearts. Prosper, especially, seemed determined to "open their eyes to the error of their ways," and accordingly framed his remarks to fit their case. But so far he had not shot conviction home to them. The two were Donald and Gabrielle. They had attended almost nightly from the first; Gabrielle to relieve the monotony of the winter evenings—an incentive which, to speak the truth, drives more than one resident of the country to church—and Donald to see Gabrielle.

Prosper argued that it would be a great card to get Donald away from the Presbyterians, and as for Gabrielle, she ought to be converted on general principles—she needed it badly enough.

The last night came. Prosper determined that the opportunity should not slip by. They must be converted. His reputation was at stake. Everybody was talking about it, and even the minister himself seemed to take an especial interest in the black-eyed girl who always sat next the wall about half-way between the door and the altar. It was generally understood, without being stated in so many words, that the principal object of this last meeting was to move upon these two young people. Prosper vowed that if they came to the meeting he would convert them. But would they come? That was the question which agitated the minds of the people all that day. Some said they could not face it; others shook their heads without saying anything. The time for meeting came. Everybody was on hand, and the little school-house was packed. Suspense was high, till suddenly the door opened and in walked Gabrielle to her usual seat. There were quick glances in all directions around the room—the people could not help it. In a few moments Donald appeared, in company with Pierre, from the shanty. Donald sat near the door, while Pierre stalked pompously up to the very front. Expectancy ran high—the contest was on. The Rev. Mr. Springle pleaded a sore throat, asked to be excused from the regular sermon, and forthwith turned the meeting over to Brother Tryne. He had learned diplomacy from his association with Prosper, and he argued that time could not be wasted that night in a formal sermon.

Prosper arose, and taking the hymn-book in his hand turned over several pages.

"Before we proceed with the hymn," he said, closing the book, with a finger between the leaves to keep the place, "I have a few words I want to say to you. We have come here to-night for the last time during this revival. We have come with our hearts full of the love of God for what he has done for us, and yet we have come with our hearts full of fear and tremblin' lest some poor, miserable sinner shall escape from this glorious opportunity, and be doomed to eternal torment. My friends, think of a lake made all of fire and brimstone, a lake burnin' on forever and ever and ever, a lake which gits hotter, and hotter, and hotter every time a wicked sinner is dropped down into it. Think of havin' to sizzle and scorch in that red-hot mass through all the countless ages of eternity! Some folks says that a sinner is only to burn up seven times, and then that's an end to it; but I tell you here to-night that this is not so. The sinner doesn't git let off so easy as that, by any means. The Bible says that the sinner is to endure eternal torment in a lake of fire which is never quenched. What does that mean? It means that the torture is to last right through—no git-ting out of it by simply burnin' up. No such an easy death as that. Think of it! Think of flounderin' round in that melted brimstone, with the yellow stuff runnin' right into your eyes, and ears, and mouth, and not able to git a breath of fresh air nohow—and think of doin' this for all eternity! Why, you imagine it's an awful thing now if you burn your finger jest the least bit—if you let a spark from the fire fall on it for an instant. You jump, and grab your finger, and stick it in the

snow; but let me tell you, you'll have no snow there, and 'twon't be only your finger that's burnt either. Oh, my friends, why not fly from the wrath to come—why not keep out of this awful fire? Why not come to Christ to-night? He stands ready with open arms. He stands willin' to save you. Tears of pity are runnin' down his face this very minute. He is sweatin' great drops of his precious blood for you now. Why won't you come? Why not come to Christ?"

He gave out the hymn, and then continued in a subdued tone, which was even more impressive than his former eloquence: "As we sing this hymn, we invite all who are on the Lord's side to come forward. It is a simple thing to do. It jest shows which side you're on. If you come forward, we know you are on the Lords' side; if you hang back, we know that you're on the side of one who will drag your souls straight down to perdition. It's an awful moment for some of you. Rise and sing."

Mrs. Farley led out in a tremulous voice:

*"Come, ye sinners, poor an-d needy,
Weak and wounded, sick an-d sore;
Jesus read-y stands to save you,
Full of pi-ty, lo-ve, an-d power."*

Rushing right into the midst of the last word, Prosper infused new life into the singing with his full, strong voice highly pitched above the others, and his hand waving out over the congregation:

*"Turn to the Lord and seek sal-va-tion,
Sound the p-ra-i-s-e of his dear name;
Glo-ry, hon-or, and salvation,
Christ the Lord has come to reign!"*

A quite general movement toward the front took

place, embracing all of the old members and the new converts. A distinct line was thus drawn between the consecrated ground around the altar and the abode of unbelievers in the rear. Donald and Gabrielle stayed with the sinners.

Prosper looked straight at Gabrielle and turned his batteries point-blank in her direction. He knew if he captured her Donald would surrender arms unconditionally.

"There are some within the sound of my voice," he began, "for whom the prayers of this congregation have been goin' up for weeks, and yet they remain blind to the awful chances they are takin' by stubbornly holdin' out against the dictates of even their own conscience. I know their conscience must prick 'em. How can it help it? How can they even dare to draw a natural breath while every minute they are flyin' right in the face of Providence by refusin' such an opportunity as this? Why, jest think of it! It's like defyin' God. I feel constrained to believe that the Lord brought about these meetin's for the express purpose of savin' their souls, and here they are jest as much as sayin' to the Lord that they don't want his salvation. Why, its awful, when you come to think of it! I'd expect to be struck dead on my way home from this meetin' if I held out like they are doin'. And who knows but what they will be? No one can tell what is to happen. We are never sure of our lives a single minute. We may none of us ever see the morning light again. Think of it! And then for any one to hold out, when it's such a simple thing to come forward here and be saved. Again we ask you, while we are singin' the rest of this hymn, to come forward. In the

name of the Lord, in the name of the blessed angels that are hoverin' round you this very minute, in the name of your family and friends, we plead with you to come forward."

But the hymn was finished without a response.

"Let us pray," said Prosper. "Let us put up such a petition to the Throne of Grace that the old enemy Satan will be forced out of the hearts of his victims here to-night. Let us pray."

He began in a general way, and offered up a prayer for everybody indiscriminately; then, warming to his work, he continued:

"And O Lord, we have some with us to-night—ah, some who are sorely in need of thy salvation—ah, some who are stiff-necked and will not yield—ah. O Lord, come down in thy almighty power—ah, come down and rescue these poor perishin' souls—ah. Send down thine arrows of conviction—ah; send them right down this minute, O Lord. Yes, dear Lord, we have some with us to-night—ah, some whose souls we can not yield up to Satan—ah. O Lord, make thy presence known—ah; pick 'em out, Lord—pick out these poor sinners, and claim them with thy savin' grace. O Lord, there is *one* among their number—O Lord, we must save that one—ah. Lord, come down like a mighty chariot of fire—ah, and snatch this poor soul from the clutches of Satan—ah. Satan has a terrible hold on her, Lord. He has his chains wound tight around her, doubled and twisted, and welded solid—ah. O Lord, break those chains! Nothing but thine all-powerful will can save her. Snatch her like a precious brand from the burnin'—ah. Cast her sins away from her, like the flesh-pots of Sodom and Gomorrer—ah. O

Lord, we can not give her up—ah. You must save her, Lord—ah. You must save her—ah. You must save her to-night—ah; yes, this very night—ah; this very hour—ah. You must come right down—ah, right down *now*—ah, right down this minute—ah. Make thy presence known—ah by savin' this poor lost lamb—ah, and bringin' her safe into the fold—ah. O Lord!—ah, O precious Jesus!—ah, O heavenly Spirit—ah, descend upon us!—ah, and take us into Thine eternal rest—ah, forever and ever. Amen."

As the congregation rose to their seats the majority found it impossible to avoid glancing over to where Gabrielle sat, to see how she was affected. Such personal allusions in a prayer were not customary, and they all felt that the crisis had come with Gabrielle. Many of them were convinced by the expression on her face and her somewhat deepened color that conviction had been driven home at last, and that it was only a matter of the next exhortation when she would go forward.

Prosper remained on his knees several seconds, overcome with the tempest of his emotions, and was the last to rise. He sat quietly down, with his hand shading his eyes, apparently unable to divert his mind from the spirit of his prayer.

Mr. Springle, noting the situation, arose and said:

"We will now have a short experience meeting. We want to know what the Lord has done for those who have manifested their determination to enlist in his service. We shall be glad to hear from some of the more recent converts. Their experience is always interesting."

Instantly Pierre was on his feet.

"My frans," he began, very impressively, "I was

about de weekedest li'l sinner in dat whole shantee. Sawm-tam I *swear*. Yas, my frans, dass so—dass so," shaking his head very seriously. "Sawm-tam I got a crank on my stom-eck, sawm-tam, w'en I *hain't got no crank!* Dass so. I no ax any man how weeked I was, de shanty-men dey *know*. Dey can tol' you. An' my waf, she can tol' you. Oh, I was *weeked!* Well—dass all right *now*. I cam here dat odder *tam*. I feel good w'en I cam, bot after li'l whal I no feel so good. I got a pain—I got a pain raght here," placing both hands over his heart, "an' I ax mysalf, 'Pierre, you're de weekedest li'l sinner in dat whole shantee.' Den I cam up by de frawnt, an' altogedder queek lak, I feel so good. I feel lak I got a pleasant pain all oder mysalf. Dass so. My waf can tol' you how weeked I was. Oh, my poor waf," suddenly breaking off and shaking his head dolefully as he thought of her unconverted state. "My waf, she no cam here. I ax her why she no cam wid *me*, an' she ax me raght off queek lak, 'I got to iron dem clo'es.' Oh, my poor waf, my poor waf!"

Overcome with his emotion he sat down, and Mr. Springle, possibly fearing a repetition, invited some of the older members to give their experience.

Mrs. Farley arose to her feet, sniffing in her handkerchief, and went on to tell what the Lord had done for her. She wanted it understood that it was no cross, but a blessed privilege, for her to testify for Jesus. He had taken her miserable feet from the mire and the clay, and had placed them on the solid Rock of Ages. How he ever came to think it worth while to save her she did not know, but she felt that she had ofttimes tried his patience by her numerous shortcomings. She concluded by saying, "I'm a poor, blind, blunderin', stum-

blin' critter, but if I only manage to stumble into heaven, it's—all—I'll—ask."

After several others had spoken, Prosper again took charge, and displayed a change of tactics by saying, in a subdued tone:

"I want to find out how every soul in this house stands to-night. Some of you appear to be determined to defy the Lord, and refuse this means of grace. I can't think that you really mean this. I think that some of you hesitate because you don't quite agree with our methods of conversion. Some of you prob'ly don't believe in revivals. I, for one, do; but that ain't no reason why every one else should, and I want to respect the religious beliefs of all of you. I jest have one request to make. It is a very simple one, and I know that you will grant it. I want every one in the house who believes that the Lord is a better master than the devil to rise to their feet—simply stand up. It is a little thing to do. Everybody rise."

Everybody did rise, converted and unconverted—except Gabrielle. She sat still as a statue, and there was an awful hush over the congregation as they saw it. It was just like a defiant refutation of Providence. Prosper stood looking impressively straight at her. There was a painful suspense for the moment.

"Please be seated," said Prosper; and the people knew from the look on his face that something was coming. "I wouldn't have believed," he began, "that we had any one in our midst who would openly declare that they'd sooner serve the devil than the Lord! This is awful! The depths of human depravity are deeper than I thought they were."

Some of the women were sobbing, and the scene was

impressive. Prosper, with his eagle eye upon Gabrielle, detected a change coming over her countenance. "She is yielding at last," he thought.

"I will give one more chance for the reclaiming of this lost soul. I can not turn her over to perdition without another effort, and I ask you all to pray—and pray as if your own souls depended on it—while I give out another hymn."

He announced the hymn, and then said, slowly: "While we are singin' this hymn—this last hymn—we appeal to this one poor waverin' soul to come forward. It may be the last chance this side of eternity."

When the congregation rose to sing Gabrielle remained seated. Prosper's eyes fairly danced for joy. This was the first tangible evidence of her conviction.

"Glory to God! Glory to God!" he shouted. "The Spirit is workin'!"

All eyes instinctively turned toward Gabrielle to discover the reason for Prosper's demonstration. She reddened more and more under the scrutiny. "Glory to God!" exclaimed Prosper, confident of victory. "Satan is yieldin'. I knew it must come! I knew it must come!"

Gabrielle's head was somewhat bowed to hide her face. She moved slightly on her seat. The people were nerve-strung and breathless. Some were hysterically weeping. The scene was reaching a climax. Gabrielle moved more nervously in unison with Prosper's exclamations. She partly turned on her seat. "She can't hold out another minute," said Prosper to himself, and as if in answer to his thought, Gabrielle suddenly rose and began to leave her seat.

"*Glory to God!*" shouted Prosper. "*Glory to God in the highest! Glory! Glory! Glor—*"

Abruptly he stopped in the middle of the word, and the people turned to see the cause. Gabrielle was walking straight toward the door, and, motioning to Donald, he opened it for her, and they both stepped out, leaving the congregation appalled.

XVI.

DONALD AND GABRIELLE.

WHEN the door closed behind Donald and Gabrielle, she impulsively took his arm, and they started for home. Donald was instantly transported to a seventh heaven more radiant than that described by Prosper in his most imaginary mood. This was the first time that Gabrielle had ever taken his arm. It was the first spontaneous act of hers which gave him any encouragement.

"Well, what do you think of it all?" asked Gabrielle, after they had walked some minutes in silence.

"I was just thinking," answered Donald, "and wondering how it was you didn't stand up when Mr. Tryne said that about the Lord and the devil. I stood up willingly, although my people are all Presbyterians, for I saw no objections to that."

"Neither would I have seen any objections if I thought Prosper meant every word he said, and if I hadn't seen through his trick."

"His trick? What do you mean?"

"Well now, old blindy," she retorted, giving his arm a little pinch which sent him into ecstasies, "couldn't you see all along that Prosper has been determined to convert us two? He was bound to get me, anyhow," she continued, dropping her head rather quickly as she noticed the pointed connection she had just made between them, "and when his regular plan didn't work

he thought up something else. Oh, Prosper's cunnin', I tell you. He said what he did about serving the Lord and the devil thinking I couldn't get around that. If I had got up then he would have gone on with a lot of stuff about me not havin' the moral courage to face Satan openly, and he would have made as big a fool of himself as he did a little while after, when I didn't stand up when they went to sing."

"Why, you seem to be awful hard on religion. I think that—"

"No, I'm not. I don't mean it in that way. 'Tain't so much the religion I don't like as it is some of the folks that's in it. Religion is all right enough, but it's got into the hands of a mighty poor set around the Nonquon here. Why, jest look 'em over. There's Prosper, as big a rascal as ever lived—"

"Oh, I wouldn't say that, Gabrielle," interposed Donald, somewhat shocked at Gabrielle's estimate of the man who had just been pleading so earnestly for the salvation of souls.

"Wouldn't say that, hey? Well, you wouldn't say the truth then, that's all. Prosper may pull the wool over the eyes of other folks by his palaverin' ways in the pulpit—and I will admit that he *does* seem to be in earnest while he is there—but I can't forget jest how tricky he is at other times. No-siree; Prosper's a fraud, and you can't git around it."

"But Prosper is not the only religious person around the Nonquon. They're not all dishonest, I hope."

"No, not all of them. There's the minister, Mr. Springle, I believe he is an honest man, and means all he says."

Donald did not quite fancy this, as the minister's

name had been coupled with Gabrielle's by the gossips in a manner somewhat disturbing to him. They had argued in a remote way that if Gabrielle were only converted it might result in a material sequence as well as a spiritual one. But Gabrielle was oblivious to Donald's impressions, and went on: "And Mrs. Tryne, if ever there was a good man she is one. The only fault with her is that she will try to make folks believe that Prosper doesn't really mean to do wrong when he cheats other people."

"Well, if you were married to a man like that wouldn't you do the same thing?"

"I wouldn't be married to a man like that," snapped Gabrielle.

"But you can't always tell beforehand. If you got to like a man and married him, and then found out afterward that he wasn't what you expected, wouldn't you stick up for him before folks?"

"Course I would. I'd be a big enough fool to do that. I'd tell lies for him, or anything. That's the way with us women. We don't know anything, and never will—specially when it comes to thinkin' about the men. D'you know what I'd do if I was a man and had a good woman?" she asked, suddenly changing her tone.

"No."

"Well, I'd use her a good sight better'n most men do their wives."

"Why?"

"'Cause she'd deserve it. Women don't have too good a time in this world, anyhow."

"Why, I thought *you* always had a pretty good time," said Donald, rather surprised at Gabrielle's mood.

"Well, you see," she said, with a return to her old

mischievous spirit, "*I ain't married*. And, anyhow, I don't have half as good a time as I could if I was a boy. A girl can't do the first thing with a little fun in it but what she's called a tom-boy. I'm sick of always bein' held down 's if I was a dummy or an idiot. If folks only knowed it, a girl can cut up and have some fun and yet behave herself."

"Well, I'm sure I never knew that you were held down very much," said Donald.

"I ain't held down half so much as I would be if it wasn't for father. He seems to know jest what I like better'n anybody else, and he lets me do a *little* bit as I want to. He ain't pesterin' the life out of me all the time about bein' a heathen, and I'd do more for him this minute than anybody else, jest because he gives me a little peace. He's the best man ever lived, anyway," she added, with emphasis. "Talk about your religious people. Why, there's father, who never goes to meetin' at all, and yet I'd take his word sooner'n I would any of the church folks. He'd cut off his right hand before he would do anything wrong. And there's Philander Hunt, catch him doin' a mean thing! No-siree. Oh, I tell you when you come to compare the religious folks around here with the ones that don't make any claim to religion, it's enough to make a person sick of the name of a church."

"I hope you don't quite mean that."

"No, I don't s'pose I do," she answered, more thoughtfully. "I told you before that it wasn't religion itself that I didn't care for—it was the folks."

The night was snapping cold, and the two were walking along with bowed heads facing the wind. The snow creaked under their feet at each step, and made

almost the only sound they heard. All about them the scene was quiet, and it was the kind of night which made companionship a comfort. It was peculiarly so to Donald. He had never walked in this way with Gabrielle before, and she had never talked so freely to him. It was a new experience to have her so near him, and to be told so frankly her sentiments on the several important topics that had come up. It was like taking him into her confidence, he thought. Donald counted it the most delightful experience he had ever known, and was just conjecturing as to the likelihood of any future opportunities like this arising for his benefit, when Gabrielle rather startled him by looking up into his face and suddenly asking:

"What are you thinking about?"

"I—well, I was just thinking that—that this is the last night of the meetings," he answered, rather confused.

"And feeling bad because I didn't git converted, I s'pose?"

"No, I don't mean that."

"Well, what do you mean?"

"I—was just thinking—was just wondering—" He hesitated a moment, and Gabrielle said, "Wondering what?"

"Wondering when I'd be likely to see you again."

"Well, you'll be likely to see me whenever you happen to be in the same place as I am." She said this with an attempt at her usual repartee; but somehow it did not seem congenial to her mood to-night. She would have had something unenviable in her nature if she were not affected more or less by the scenes at the meeting, and though Prosper's words had done little

else than to incense her, yet the whole occurrence had left its impression upon her, and somehow softened her.

"Donald," she said, more quietly, "I don't feel like joking or saying anything mean to you to-night. I usually can—but not to-night. I feel different toward you someway—oh, here's our gate," suddenly turning in, "and I'm glad of it, for I'd be saying something foolish if I didn't look out. Well, good-night."

"Hold on," said Donald, as he saw her hurrying toward the door.

"Good-night!" she cried, as she darted inside.

"Well, she beats all," said the Scotch boy to himself, walking away. "I can't keep track of her at all."

But on the whole he was pleased with that night's experience. She had said things to him that she never had before, and she had acted in a way altogether new. The query was: Would she be the same when he saw her again?

XVII.

THE COUNTRY TAVERN.

IN those days the railroad which now runs through the Nonquon district was not dreamed of, and all the marketing had to be done over the wagon-roads. Most of the grain raised in that vicinity, and for miles north of it, was hauled to Port Rowen in winter; and between the farmers and the shantymen the roads were kept pretty lively all through sleighing. At short intervals along the road small taverns were located, each bearing the suggestive sign over the door, "*Licensed to sell wine, beer, and other spirituous liquors.*" They were supported mostly by droppers-in on their way to and from market. Jerry's tavern at the Nonquon was quite a resort, and many a noisy crowd has spent a winter evening in his bar-room.

One night shortly after the revival a larger crowd than usual assembled there. It had been a busy day in Port Rowen; a large quantity of grain had been sold, and much money paid to the farmers. The teams were sent spinning toward home after the business was finished in town, and the distance between the "Port" and Jerry's was considered sufficient to call for a halt at the latter place, for the purpose of "gittin' something hot to drink."

A rather brisk acquaintance had been made with the tumbler and the mug before Port Rowen was abandoned, and by the time the Nonquon was reached the

horses were steaming from reckless driving. In this condition they were brought up with a sudden turn into Jerry's shed, and left standing—with or without a blanket, as happened to suit the mood of the driver—till all hours of the night.

"Better take in your whip," said B'gob-sir to a sleigh-load of young fellows who had just driven up, "or somebody'll likely steal it."

"Oh, devil take the whip," was the offhand reply, as they sauntered toward the bar-room.

"Well," muttered the hostler to himself, "I didn't edsackly say *he'd* take it, but somebody else prob'ly will. 'Tain't none o' my bread and butter, though. Hello, Dougald, how are you?" he called out, as old Dougald McLaughlan came along with a very ill-kept team. Dougald was the farmer to whom the Widow McFarlane had sent Donald to borrow some pea-straw when she wanted to cover her turnip-pit. To-night he had not progressed far enough yet in his libations to make him sociable. It took a good deal in those days to warm up a big Scotch farmer, and the liquor drank at Port Rowen had been sufficient only to create a desire for more, so that he was rather glum; and in answer to B'gob-sir's salutation he merely gave an unintelligible grunt, and clambered out of his sleigh to tie his horses.

"Purty lively day down to the Port," again ventured B'gob-sir. Another grunt, as the Scotchman fumbled about the harness.

"Guess you didn't git a very high figure for your barley, did you?" said the hostler, slightly nettled, "though I heard that grain was purty well up to-day."

"Come and have a drink," was the irrelevant but

agreeable reply, as the horses were tied. B'gob-sir said not another word, but they both started toward the tavern. What a world of discord that expression has quieted in the history of the human race. And what a world of discord it has created.

The occupants of the bar-room were beginning to get noisy. Young fellows whose only claim to distinction lay in their ability to steer a plow clear of stones and stumps in summer, or successfully bind a load of logs on a sleigh in winter, made a boisterous show of their manliness by tossing off frequent glasses of liquor. The older ones drank, not for show, but because they liked it.

"Hello, Dunc! Just in time. Come on and have something." This was said to a young man who had sauntered in.

"No, I don't care for anything to-night."

"Well, what the h—l are you here for, then, if you don't want to drink?"

"Oh, I just strolled in to see what was goin' on." A motive which takes young men to the tavern as well as to the church. The greatest drawback to country life for young people is lack of companionship. It drives them to seek diversions not always to their benefit.

"Oh, I know what's the matter with you. The pertacted meetin' has jest been goin' on, and I hear they come near gettin' you up to the bench. How about that, Dunc? Didn't you ask 'em to pray for you one night?"

To admit a weakness of this kind in the bar-room was to cause as great a loss of caste for the individual as to admit in church that he was in the habit of drink-

ing liquor. A virtue in one place was a vice in the other.

"Not much I didn't," said Dunc, with some spirit.

"Oh, come now, own up."

The crowd began to laugh at Dunc's expense.

"I hain't got anything to own, I tell you. I went to the meetin's same's other folks, but I didn't go up to the bench—not by a long shot."

"Wanted to go bad enough, though, I guess. Been there long before this if you wasn't afraid the boys would make fun of you. Honest, now, didn't you ask 'em to pray for you?"

This was wit of a high order, and it caused a roar.

"See here, you fellers think you're almighty smart, don't you? I ain't any nearer bein' converted than the rest of you. I guess I'm not quite so big a fool as that yet."

"Well, then, come and have a drink with us, why don't you? If you're goin' to be one o' the boys you've got to drink."

Dunc evidently concluded to be one of the boys, for he stepped up to the bar and ordered his liquor with the others. Before the night was over he had forgotten any of the good resolutions that he might possibly have made during the revival. If Prosper had been there he would probably have said: "The devil is mighty quick to take hold as soon as the Lord lets go."

B'gob-sir's comment on the occasion was to the effect that "That last lot o' whisky Jerry got in was a leetle bit worse than anything he had struck yet."

"How is it you drink so much of it, then?" some one asked.

"Jest to keep it from spoilin'. Why, b'gob-sir, that

last drink I took wouldn't 'a' lasted till to-morrow mornin'. It would 'a' been too weak by that time to run out of the bottle."

"Then you simply drink it to keep Jerry from losing it, hey?"

"Jest the p'int—jest the p'int edsackly. Wouldn't drink it on no other account. I don't like licker very well, anyhow," he added, confidentially. "Wouldn't touch a drop, only to be sociable."

"Who were you being sociable with the other mornin' when I found you in here behind the bar alone, before the rest of the folks were up?" asked Jerry, with a wink to the others.

"Well now, Jerry, that's all right. I jest wanted to do a little cleanin' up in there—say, do you know, Jerry, that you keep about the dirtiest bar of any one in fourteen ord'nary townships? Why, b'gob-sir, I'm 'shamed of it half the time. When I tended bar down in—"

"You tended bar!" derisively interposed the young fellow who had previously in the evening commended his whip to the care of his satanic majesty. "You tended bar! When did you ever tend bar, I'd like to know?"

"My sonny," answered the hostler, suddenly changing his tone to a suave, patronizing air, "I tended bar before you was bigger'n a half a pint o' cider all drunk up. I tended bar before you had started to grow your pin-feathers—before you—before you'd pecked any at your shell. Why, b'gob-sir," he continued, warming up, "when I was your age I knowed more in a minute than a yoke of oxen weighin' fifty hundred could tramp into your skull in a month o' Saturday nights. You think you're mighty smart, my boy, but let me tell you, if you're ever goin' to know enough to chaw second-

handed gum you've got to begin to learn right off. When the Lord made you, I guess the devil was around botherin' him a good deal, for he made a mighty poor job."

"Well, you must 'a' been a h—l of a feller when you was my age," said the youth, trying to turn the laugh that followed B'gob-sir's tirade.

"No, I'd 'a' been too much like you if I was."

"If you was my age now you'd take that back," replied the young fellow, bristling up.

"Would I? I ain't in the takin' back bizness. And more'n that, when I was your age I could 'a' licked a meetin'-house full o' you. Why, b'gob-sir," he continued, turning to the crowd, and waving his hand out over them to make his remarks general—from a possible fear that he was getting into too close quarters with the angry youth. "Why, b'gob-sir, folks don't know anything about fightin' these days. When I was a young feller we thought nothin' o' fightin' all night long, hard as we could pelt. And you couldn't lick a man then either. You could pound him all to pieces, but you couldn't lick him. He'd never give up as long as he could lift a finger, or swear at you. Oh, them was the days for fun, though."

The old fellow probably had never been in a contest of any kind except with his perpetual enemy, alcohol, but this description of these fictitious encounters did him as much good as if they had been real. In this instance it also served him a good turn, for it drew upon him the attention of the crowd, and prevented any further wrangle with the liquor-laden young fellow, who had been incensed by his remarks, and might so far have forgotten himself as to strike him.

The talk now became general on the one grand theme of personal prowess. It was always so at these carousals. No matter what was talked of in the early part of the evening, the conversation always drifted around, as the liquor began its work, to the subject of fighting. Man is essentially a boaster when he is full—or partially full—of whisky, and every man thinks he can whip every other man. Words grew loud, hands waved, money flew, and whisky gurgled in the throats of men who would be sorry to-morrow. The atmosphere was filled with the aroma of steaming liquor, while the conversation ran largely into boasting and exaggeration.

"I can lick any man in the Nonquon."

"You couldn't lick a mouse if its tail was tied behind its back."

A general roar.

"I've fought since I was knee-high to a grasshopper, and I never got a whippin' yet."

"I don't want to hurt any of you fellers, but look out how you're shovin' us around here."

"Oh, you put on a tin duster if you're so 'fraid o' gittin' smashed."

"No use talkin', I've *got* to fight some one. *Whoop!*"

"You fight! You've done most o' your fightin' with your feet, I guess. You'd run like a deer if any one said 'boo' to you."

"Come and have a drink."

"Hurrah, boys! Come and have a drink."

A general rush to the bar, bottles slammed on the counter, glasses clinked, money thrown over the bar, little heed given to the change, and the change seldom of the correct amount. A familiar slap on the back, with a return attempt to knock off a hat. A loud guffaw

ringing above the others; a good deal of swearing, a maudlin embrace, a surging, jostling, grinning, clamorous crowd. These men are kings—and fools.

Old Dougald McLaughlan had been consistently sticking to gin all the evening, and had at last got warmed up. He was red in the face, and still steaming. When the pugilistic talk rose to its height, he straightened himself up and, with an awkward gyration of his hand peculiar to his race, exclaimed:

"I'm sixty-four years of old, an' I naver fight alraady, but gi' me a mon o' my own old and my own haavy, and let him strike me—I'll get up again, and I'll strike him, an' he'll naver rise."

This caused another roar, and the general remark: "Dougald, you'll have to set up the drinks for that."

Dougald interpreted this as a compliment, and acquiesced. Old B'gob-sir was standing near the Scotchman at the time, and through mistake got hold of the gin-bottle. He poured some out and took a great swallow, and then began dancing around and spitting violently.

"What's the matter with you?" asked one of the crowd, laughing.

"What in the"—spit—"what in the d-d-devil's in that bottle?"

"Gin."

"For God's sake"—spit—"for God's sake, gi' me"—spit—"gi' me some whisky to take the taste out o' my mouth, quick! That's the pizenest stuff I ever put into my throat. Ugh! Gi' me some whisky."

"Thought that last lot o' whisky I got in was the worst you'd struck," said Jerry, with a laugh.

"Well, it's milk and molasses beside that gin. Dou-

gald, how'n thunder do you ever manage to swaller"—spit—"swaller that sickenin' stuff? It's worse'n peppery dish-water mixed with the drippin's poured off'n b'iled snakes."

"Humph!" ejaculated the Scotchman. "'Gen I tuk a mouthful o' yon whusky, I'd need to do more'n *sput*. I'd ha' to rub my tongue wi' a coarse file."

"'T wouldn't do any petic'lar harm to put a file on your tongue, anyway," said B'gob-sir. "It's thick enough, God knows."

"Theck! Theck, you say—"

And instantly they were in a jangle of words.

"Here, you two old duffers, stop quarrelin'. You couldn't either one of you strike a barn door if you was leanin' up agin' it. Le's have a drink." This was enough. The two belligerents were soon embracing each other in a friendly jabber over the bar.

There was an end to that night, as there is to all others. The last state of those in Jerry's bar-room was worse than the first, but—they had had a "good time."

XVIII.

A TRIP TO FRASER'S CREEK.

"PHILANDER, you promised to take me up Fraser's Creek sometime," said Gabrielle one day as she met Philander midway between her home and the village.

"If to-morrow is a fine day, you put on your moccasins and snow-shoes, and I'll take you—that is, if your mother is willin'."

"Oh, she'll be willin'—if she doesn't know anything about it," answered Gabrielle, with mischief in her eye.

"See here, old girl, I don't know whether I can agree to that or not. What do you suppose your father would say?"

"He'd let me go in a minute," she exclaimed, with assurance. "I'll ask him if you say so. Father's always sensible about anything I want to do, and he wouldn't say a word against it so long as he knew you was with me."

"Well, if you're sure about that, I guess we'll go."

"Must I say anything to father about it?"

"Oh, suit yourself. I'll leave that to you, but I think you'd better ask him."

"All right, I'll suit myself, and—I won't ask him."

"Gabe, you're a minx. Anything to be contrary. Why is it you are always takin' the opposite side against me?"

"'Cause I like you."

"Is that the reason you act so contrary with—"

"Philander!"

"I won't say another word," as he wheeled on his heel and walked away.

They had a great tramp the following day. The snow was deep, but that did not interfere with them; in fact it added immensely to their satisfaction, as they were able, with their snow-shoes, to cut across fields, and walk along the drifts and over fences without any obstruction. There is a sense of supremacy in treading on snow-shoes, when the landscape is thickly coated with the white yielding mass which renders travel by any other means almost impossible. It is something akin to walking on the water; the drifts are like immense swells, the hollows like troughs. A misstep with the snow-shoes on the brow of a drift means a collapse, after the manner of a plunge in the sea, while the novice is about as helpless on land as he would be in the water. But Philander and Gabrielle were not novices, and we have no tumbles to record on this trip.

"Gabe, I've got something to say to you to-day, and I want you to listen. Will you?"

"Depends."

"Depends on what?"

"On what you got to say."

"No, that won't do. I want you to promise me that you will hear me out."

"Did I ever refuse to hear you?"

"No, but you've run me track a good many times."

"That's just what I'm saying. If you begin to say anything you've no business to."

"Well, I don't s'pose it is any of my business," he said.

more reflectively, "and yet I'd like to talk to you about it."

"Well, if I need it, you'd better talk."

She was scarcely in the mood to suit Philander, but he despaired of ever finding her in a better one, so he began, somewhat awkwardly:

"A girl has got to marry sometime, hasn't she?"

"I don't see why," with a toss of her head.

"Well, but all the best girls do marry."

"Don't know about that."

"Now see here, Gabe, you know *you'll* marry, and that's what I'm tryin' to git at. You're the hardest girl to talk to I ever struck."

"Good heavens!" thought Gabrielle, somewhat startled. "I wonder if he is going to ask me to marry him! I wouldn't hurt Philander's feelings for the world, but—"

"What I was goin' to say," continued Philander, "is that I've been watchin' you for some time now, and I think you need some one to give you a little advice."

"What in the world *is* he gittin' at?" was Gabrielle's puzzled reflection.

"A girl may go on actin' jest as you do a little too long, and when she wakes up she may find she's waked up too late."

"Surely he isn't going to preach to me like Prosper does," she thought.

They were walking along side by side, and Philander glanced at Gabrielle's face to see how she was taking it. His first reflection was:

"Lord a massy, what a perty creature she is! Think I never seen her look so han'some before." His next thought he gave expression to.

"Why don't you say something?"

"Hain't got anything to say."

"Well, but a feller'd natu'ally expect something from you. Never seen you so still before."

"Disappointed because I didn't run you off the track, hey?"

"No, not that. But I jest want to know if you don't think there's some danger of a girl wakin' up too late?"

"Not when her father has to have an early breakfast to go to the shanty."

"Oh pshaw! Now, Gabe, you know what I mean."

"That's jest what I don't know."

"Do you mean to say that you don't know what I'm drivin' at?" he asked, looking at her in surprise.

"Of course I don't." And he saw she meant it.

"Well!" he ejaculated, "I s'pose I am an old blunderer, but I thought surely you'd see that I meant the way you was actin' with Donald."

Suddenly, in spite of herself, a bright light filled her eyes.

"Then the thought of marryin' me never entered his blessed old head," she said to herself.

Philander caught sight of her changed expression, and interpreted it to his satisfaction, but her next words were disappointing.

"I don't know how I could see that, for I wasn't aware that I had been actin' at all with him."

"That's jest the trouble. You don't act as you'd ought to."

"Well, maybe I could git some one who would tell me how I ought to act," she said, with some sarcasm.

"Oh, now, Gabe, don't you git mad at me. You and I have always been the best of friends, and we ain't goin' to quarrel now. I didn't mean to interfere with your affairs at all, and mebbe I've said more'n I had

any business to, but somehow I think a good deal of both you and Donald, and I didn't like the idea of him takin' up with that Scotch girl."

"*What* Scotch girl?"

Ah, Gabrielle, you are caught this time. No mistaking that tone and look. Philander is not so bad an old blunderer as he has given himself credit for, and that one sudden outburst has satisfied him. It is his turn to tantalize now. He answered in a slow, provoking way:

"Oh, I don't know's I could mention any *one* Scotch girl in partic'lar, but I had an idea that a level-headed young chap like Donald would naturally begin to look around among the Scotch girls for a wife, when he couldn't git any encouragement some place else. He'd be a fool if he didn't. I wouldn't stand it a minute to be used as mean as you've used him."

She slipped up to Philander's side and pinched his arm. "I'll use him meaner'n ever next time I see him," she said, with a roguish expression on her face.

"I'll resk it," answered Philander, confidently. Again she gave his arm a vicious little pinch, and continued walking close beside him. Her face was redder than the wind could make it, and her eye was aglow with a new light. She looked more beautiful than ever, Philander thought. But snow-shoes were not made for such close companionship, and she caught hers in the side of his and nearly fell. He seized her arm in time to save her, and remarked:

"That's the first time I ever saw you trip, Gabe."

"Well, I'm makin' a perfect fool of myself, anyway, to-day. I don't know what ails me—and—and it's all your fault," she said, with some confusion.

"No, Gabe, you're not makin' a fool of yourself—

you're makin' a woman of yourself. And I jest want to remark that that woman will be the sweetest, the pertiest, the finest, and the best woman on top of this hull earth."

"Now stop that, Philander, or I'll have to run you off the track."

"Well, there's one track you can't run me away from, for here we are right along by the edge of the creek, and there's only one track to take."

In an instant she was on the alert. "I thought you said this was such a rough place," she remarked, looking ahead.

"You ain't into the worst of it yet, and anyhow you must remember there's lots of snow on the ground and we're on snow-shoes. If you tackled this in summer or when there was only a few inches of snow, you'd sing a different tune."

"Oh pshaw, I could go through as rough a place as you."

"I don't know but what you could, Gabe," admitted Philander, as he jumped down from a big mound of snow formed by a fallen log, and saw Gabrielle spring lightly after him.

The sun had been shining brightly all morning, and the woods looked rather dark and glum to the snow-blind pedestrians as they entered the thicket. The small snow-birds twittered here and there, and seemed the only thing of life about the desolate spot.

"What do you think of it, Gabe?" asked Philander, as he saw her glancing curiously about her.

"I don't always tell what I think."

"That's so, but I bet I can guess this time."

"Bet you can't."

"I'll bet you're thinkin' that we'd better go back. Come now, own up."

"Philander, if you don't show me the way into that—that place, I'll go alone."

"All right, old girl, I'll give you more'n you bargained for."

They tramped steadily ahead for some time, and Gabrielle was forced to admit that it *was* rough.

"Makes no difference, though, I'm goin' through." And she did.

Presently Philander pointed ahead, and said:

"See that forked cedar leanin' up against the pine?"

"Yes."

"That's the spot."

"I'm glad of it," she answered, breathing hard from her exertions, "for this is gittin' pretty tiresome. Let's hurry up and git there, though," she continued, eagerly.

"Gabe, you ain't afraid o' nothin', are you?" exclaimed Philander, watching her in some surprise.

"Yes, I am; I'm afraid of havin' you tell me how I oughter act toward other folks."

"Plain to be seen that's on her mind," thought Philander, smiling to himself.

"Look here, Philander, what's this?" she suddenly asked, bending down and pointing at the snow in front of her.

"That's one of the tracks, sure's you're born."

"Tracks! What kind of a track is that, I'd like to know?"

"Jest what I'd like to know too."

"Well, let's follow it, anyhow."

"Gabe, you beat all."

"I'll beat you if you don't come along."

She was growing excited. They found that it led down toward the cedar-tree, and as they approached it they saw many other tracks leading to the upturned roots. From there a well-beaten path ran away in the direction of the cave.

"If you was up where that crotch is," said Philander, looking up the trunk of the pine, "you could see where the mouth of the cave is."

"Well, I'm goin' up."

"Goin' up? What do you mean?"

"I'm goin' to climb up this cedar."

"Gabe, you're crazy! You can't do anything of the kind. You'd fall and break your neck."

"My neck'll have to take its chances, for I'm goin' up that cedar," she replied, resolutely taking off her snowshoes. "Moccasins are jest the thing to climb trees in."

"Well, Gabe, you're a terror to snakes," he remarked, as he saw her half-way up the cedar. "Look out you don't fall."

"I can't see any cave," she observed, rather disappointedly, as she reached the top.

"No, you wouldn't likely notice it unless you knew jest where to look for it. The opening is covered."

"You say that path leads to it?"

"Yes."

"Well, you go up the path and show me where the mouth of the cave is. I'll stay here."

Philander glanced around him uneasily for a moment.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid about me," she said. "I'll stay up here till you come back."

"Plague take that girl," muttered Philander to himself as he started off. "I don't know's I was so afraid

about her as I was about myself. And yet I s'pose I oughtn't to be frightened when she doesn't seem to care a rap. But, after all," he continued, "she hasn't seen the blamed thing yet, and doesn't have the slightest idee what it's like. I wish I hadn't brought her here."

Soon he was on the brow of the hill, and Gabrielle, peeping around the side of the pine, saw him looking down at something in front of him.

"Here it is, Gabe," he called out, touching the stone with the toe of his snow-shoe.

"Wait a minute, Philander, and let me come up and see."

"You stay where you are, missy, and don't you dare to come up here. Blame that girl, she'll get the wits frightened right out of her first thing she knows," as he looked nervously around.

"Say, Philander, I've found out something I want to tell you," she exclaimed, slipping quickly down the tree.

"*Gabe!* See here! You stay—" But she was out of sight ere he could check her. In a short time she came panting to where he was.

"What have you found out?" he asked, somewhat anxiously.

"I've found out that I want to see into the cave."

"D-d-d—why, Gabe, you make me mad enough to swear."

"Why don't you swear, then, and not stutter so?"

"See here, Gabe, I don't want to frighten you, now I've got you into this spot, but I want to tell you that this ain't no place for you, and I'm goin' to get you out of it right off. I was a fool for bringin' you here, anyhow, but I'd no idee you'd act the way you do."

"Did you s'pose I'd want to come here without seein' anything? You must think I like a long walk for nothing."

"Well, you ain't goin' to see anything more'n you have seen, for I'm goin' to take you home. If that thing'd happen to come along when we was pokin' our noses into its cave, you'd git the worst scare you ever had."

"Maybe it's in the cave now," said Gabrielle, looking, if the truth be told, a little anxiously at the stone.

"No," he said, "I've thought that all over, and if I hadn't been sure it wasn't there I'd never been fool enough to let you come up here so close. It's out some place, but no knowin' when it'll come back, and we must git right out of here."

"Not till I've seen into the cave," she said, persistently.

"Gabe, now look here—"

"Philander, I'm lookin'."

"Now you've got to do as I say, and I'm not goin' to stay here another minute, so come along."

"Do you remember one other time, Philander, when I wouldn't do as you said—the time of the storm on the lake? We came out all right then, didn't we? And we will now. I don't want to act as mean as I did then, but I must see into that cave. Jest pull off the stone and let me peep in, and I'll go."

"Well, peep in, then," said he, lifting away the stone. "If you get scared to death it ain't my fault."

"Good heavens!" she screamed, a moment later. "*Philander!* There's something—*ouch!* There's something *alive* in there! Come away, quick!" And she was running like a frightened deer before Philander

could gather his senses. He hurried after her, and found her nervously tying on her snow-shoes where she had left them at the foot of the cedar.

"I thought you said there was nothing in there," she said, in a pitiful agitation.

"Gabe, it ain't my fault. I'm sorry you got such a fright, but I thought sure it wasn't there. I thought our voices would have brought it out long ago if it was in the cave. But you were bound to look in, in spite of me."

"I know," she admitted. "Let's go home."

Gabrielle was thoughtful all the way home, but her fright did not last so long as Philander expected. She seemed to be turning something over in her mind, but what it was Philander could not guess.

"Gabe, that didn't scare you half so bad as I should have thought it would."

"It scared me bad enough at the time," she said, "for I didn't expect it; but when I had time to think it over I got over my fright. Say, Philander, do you think that can be a human being?"

"Gabe, we've all asked ourselves that before, and none of us has been able to answer it for sure, but I don't see how it can be anything else. I never had a thing puzzle me so in my life."

"I wish I was a man."

"You've got more grit'n most men, Gabe; and anyway, if you was a man Donald wouldn't have anything to keep him from marryin' that Scotch girl."

"Oh fudge! I'm not thinkin' of him, or his Scotch girl either, just now."

"But you would, though, if there had been any pe'tic'lar Scotch girl, wouldn't you now?"

"I want you to promise me one thing, Philander," she said, not noticing his question.

"What is it?"

"Don't tell anybody—not a soul—that we've been over to Fraser's Creek to-day."

"That's on your mind, hey? Well, I won't say anything about it. I thought you'd git enough of it."

"How do you know I've got enough of it?" she asked, rather significantly, as she turned at last into her home.

"Well, I should think you had. Good-by."

XIX.

HUNTING FOR TAMARACK GUM.

SEVERAL weeks had passed, and during this interval the usual course of events went on around the Nonquon. The shantymen were getting well along with their work, and the bay down beyond Beaver Meadow Point was black with logs. Most of the grain around the neighborhood was marketed, and the next year's supply of wood had been hauled up and piled in the yard to dry. Mrs. McGlorrie prided herself in having as nice a lot of beech and maple as a housewife could wish, and what added to her satisfaction was the fact that most of it had been split and piled by Dinnie. He was her favorite in all things. "I only wish Gabrielle was half the child that Dinnie is," she often said; "but it isn't in her, and a body needn't expect to have any control over her. I'm sure I can't see who she takes it from."

Gabrielle had been especially trying to her mother of late. Almost every fine day, and some days that were not fine, she put on her snow-shoes and went off somewhere for a tramp. When asked as to her route, she always said she was going down in the swamp to hunt for tamarack gum.

"Tamarack gum, to be sure," her mother would say, impatiently. "I don't see why you've got such a sudden fit for tamarack gum. It's my opinion that you go traipsin' off the way you do for no other reason than

because you'd sooner walk on them snow-shoes than to eat your dinner, 'specially since you got the moccasins from that old h'athen of an Indian. I wish him and his moccasins was in the bottom of the lake, long before you ever come across him."

But Gabrielle seemed not to be deeply influenced by the expression of these sentiments, for she continued to use the moccasins. She usually returned from her tramps before her father came in from the shanty, but one evening he got to the house earlier than usual, and she had not arrived. The occasion which brought him home so soon was a slight mishap to Pierre. He had caught his finger in a clevis in some way and got it smashed, and there happened to be no liniment at the shanty, so Bonaventure took him home for relief. Mrs. McGlorrie was binding up the finger, when Bonaventure asked where Gabrielle was.

"Oh, she hasn't got back from huntin' her tamarack gum yet. I'm out o' all manner o' patience with that girl. She's off nearly every day of her life lately, and she keeps stayin' away longer every time, till now she's traipsin' around on them snow-shoes most of her time."

"Well, well, mother, never mind," said Bonaventure, good-humoredly; "you know that when you were a girl you liked to do a great deal of running around too, so don't be too hard on her. I don't like to have her out quite so late, though," he continued, as he looked and saw it was just growing dark.

By the time the sore hand was finally dressed it had darkened perceptibly, and yet no Gabrielle. Bonaventure glanced several times out of the window, and began to grow slightly uneasy. Pierre, who smelled a good supper cooking, was loath to go back to the shanty

without tasting it, so he began to jabber away in real French fashion to Bonaventure. The ingenious Frenchman had long ago learned that to get Bonaventure's attention and good-will it was only necessary to talk of their nationality; so he rattled ahead about some of the boy companions he used to have down in Lower Canada, before he came west. He told of Paul, and Jean, and Napoleon, and—yes, he even knew a Bonaventure there. It was music in the foreman's ear, and he listened more and more intently as the narrator grew enthused over his reminiscences. The time went on, and before they knew it supper was ready. As Mrs. McGlorrie brought in the last dish she remarked:

"I don't see what's keepin' Gabrielle. She never stayed out so late as this before."

"Isn't that girl here yet?" asked Bonaventure, suddenly jumping to his feet.

"No."

"Well, that's strange. I wish you'd told me. I was listening to Pierre and forgot. Which way does she usually go? Oh, there, she's coming now, I think. I hear some one."

But it turned out to be B'gob-sir, who stamped his feet noisily to shake off the snow, and then stepped heavily into the room. After bidding them all good-evening, he asked:

"Where's Gabrielle? I've brought her up some mendin' to do. I broke off one string to my ear-lappers, and I wouldn't let any one fix 'em but her, for she made 'em for me in the first place."

Gabrielle was in the habit of fixing up a few trifling comforts for the old fellow now and then—possibly to

repay him for the many times she joked at his expense. He was proud of this attention, and held her little presents very precious.

"Gabrielle's out some place," said Bonaventure, "and I was just thinking of going and looking for her. I'm uneasy at having her away from home at this hour. I don't know which way to go, though," he continued, as he went to the door and peered anxiously out into the night.

"Now, Bonaventer, don't you worry a minute about Gabrielle," said B'gob-sir. "That girl will take care of herself wherever she is. I'd trust her for that a blamed sight quicker'n I would most men. You jest come in and set down and rest yourself content, for she will turn up all right."

There was really some solace in the old fellow's words, and in the confidence with which he said them.

"I don't know but you're right," said Bonaventure, shutting the door. "Anyhow, I'll wait a little while, for, as I said, I wouldn't know which way to start."

"We might as well have supper," said Mrs. McGlorrie. "Come, Mr. Brown, sit up and have something to eat with us."

"Oh, no, thank you," answered B'gob-sir, in a reticent way. "I don't care for anything to eat jest now."

"Why, come along," insisted Bonaventure. "Draw up your chair and have a cup of tea. You mustn't hang back like that when you're in this house."

"Well, now, Bonaventer, what a man you be. I'd no idee of havin' supper with you folks when I come up here, and I tell you I ain't a bit hungry"—at the same time sliding his chair up to the table.

For a man who "wasn't a bit hungry," B'gob-sir

made a very laudable attempt to do justice to Mrs. McGlorrie's cooking. They were nearly through with their meal, when Bonaventure began to show a renewed anxiety on Gabrielle's account. He glanced uneasily toward the door several times, and listened at every sound.

"I surely must go and look for Gabrielle," he exclaimed at last. "I can't wait here any longer. I've thought I heard her two or three times outside, but I think it must be the wind. Anyhow, I'm going."

Just as he said this there was a murmuring sound of words at the doorstep, followed by a fumbling at the latch. Every eye was turned expectantly in that direction, when suddenly the door opened, and there stood Gabrielle with the wild man held tightly by the arm!

Probably a supper-table was never demoralized so quickly before. B'gob-sir instantly took on the same panic of fright he had experienced at the time of the deer-hunt, and knocking over his chair, he floundered out into the kitchen, where he could be heard tearing around like a loose elephant among the pots, and pans, and kettles. Somehow he finally found the door, and they saw no more of him that night. Little Dennie ran screaming into the bed-room, and sought refuge under the far side of the bed. Mrs. McGlorrie stood hemmed up in a corner, with her hands lifted high in holy horror, and her eyes sticking out so far "you could hang your hat on 'em," as Gabrielle afterward claimed. Pierre—well, Pierre was French—he was naturally excitable—and he had never seen anything in all his life like this. No one can tell what he thought, but he acted very much like a chattering, terrified monkey driven to the far corner of his cage.

"Pierre, stop that noise, you fool," exclaimed Gabrielle, angrily, "or you'll frighten him away in spite of me. I've had hard enough work gittin' him here."

"Gabrielle, child," said Bonaventure, almost palsied with excitement, "what are you doing, girl? What have you there?"

"An old man, father," answered Gabrielle, with a world of pent-up pathos in her voice. "An old man who is nearly starved, and who must have a home."

The object of her remark stood beside her, in all the uncouth animalism that had struck terror to everybody who saw him. He seemed like a captured creature from the woods, ready to break away at the slightest provocation. He was frightened, and suspicious of every object about him—except one.

That was Gabrielle. He stood staring at the inmates of the house, with eyes "as big as tea-saucers," as Philander had described, and at every move made by them he would suddenly turn as if to run. But a word from Gabrielle, accompanied by a quieting gesture of her hand, brought him round, and made him cling close to her for protection. By dint of much persuasion she got him inside by the fire, and the sensation must have felt comforting to him, for he instinctively reached out his bony hands toward the stove. But she could not induce him to sit down. All the while he was darting sharp, suspicious glances at everything around him, and it was some time before Gabrielle could bring about anything like an understanding between him and the others. It was difficult to tell which was the more frightened, the wild human being or the domesticated ones. Bonaventure seemed not so much frightened as awed. He stood watching intently every action, but kept well out

of Gabrielle's way while she was attempting to reassure her charge.

Pierre, however, could not restrain himself. In his excitement he gave Bonaventure his opinion as to what the thing was, in a variety of lingo beyond interpretation. His tongue slipped back so naturally, under the stress of the moment, into his native language, that half the words were French and the other half a wholly unintelligible English. What added to his uneasiness was the fact that every time he broke out into an exclamation the wild man darted a quick, curious glance at him that drove his heart into his throat. Somehow there soon began to be a peculiar fascination in Pierre for the wild man, and he watched him closely. He looked from Pierre to Gabrielle, and from Gabrielle to Pierre, and seemed more and more absorbed in the Frenchman. He evidently began to lose his fear, but appeared restless about something, and looked almost appealingly at Gabrielle. She could not make out what caused him to act in this way, but saw that Pierre's incessant chatter seemed to absorb his attention, and relieve his fear, so she told Pierre to talk away. Finally the wild man began to show symptoms of wanting to go around on the side of the stove toward Pierre. This caused a fresh flow of French from Pierre, while the wild man stopped short and stared at him with that same puzzled, peculiar expression. All at once his lips began to move, and a low, muttering sound came from him. It was almost a whisper, emitted in short, jerky intervals, and seemed like the halting utterance of a thought struggling for recognition in a blank mind.

Suddenly Pierre ceased his chatter and listened intently, then broke out in the greatest excitement:

"By golly, Bonaventure, *she's Franch!*"

"What was *that* you said, Pierre?" asked Bonaventure, almost as excited as the other.

"I tol' you she's *Franch*. She spick *de français!*"

"Are you *sure*, Pierre?"

"Sure! *Mon Dieu!* Can't you leesten? I tol' you yaas, she's Franch! *Parlez-vous français?*" he said, turning to the wild man.

A ray of intelligence shot across the uncouth face, and after a moment's hesitation the lips moved again, but with the same halting utterance.

"She no spick *good*," said Pierre, "bot—she's Franch."

Bonaventure was strangely moved. Somehow he felt the same sensation of awe that had come over him in the woods when they were searching for the cave.

The element of fear seemed to be subsiding with the wild man, and he glanced around, till finally his eye fell on the supper-table. He looked somewhat greedily toward it, and Gabrielle moved him up to a chair by the table and managed to force him into it. As he was sitting down he seized a bit of bread and began munching it. His back was turned to the others. Suddenly he sprang to his feet, and turned and looked suspiciously at them. Gabrielle pushed him around to the other side of the table, and seated him where his eyes could watch them. She sat close to him, and fed him bountifully.

"Isn't this worth bringin' him home for?" she said. "Look at the way he eats. Poor old fellow, he's nearly starved."

The wild man evidently liked to hear Gabrielle talk. He even stopped chewing while she spoke, and nestled

up close to her in a way that made Mrs. McGlorrie's "flesh creep," as she afterward declared. The girl exerted a wonderful influence over him for some reason. After feeding him his fill, she took him again to the stove, and this time he sat down. The sense of animal comfort was fast allaying his suspicion, and Gabrielle was soon relieved to see that he had lost all disposition to run away.

Little Dennie, who had been shivering under the bed all this time, hearing that the excitement had for some reason died down, ventured to come out. As he stepped cautiously to the bed-room door, the wild man caught sight of him, and instantly a strange agitation came over him. It was not fear—that was plain—but a pathetic emotion of some sort seized him, and he began to gasp for breath and tremble. He looked intensely—almost wistfully—at Dennie, and started to go toward him; but it was not in the same way that he had approached Pierre. Evidently there was nothing about Pierre except his speech which attracted him, for as soon as Pierre stopped talking French he paid no further attention to him. But there was something in the appearance of Dennie which seemed to have a sudden fascination for him. That poor youth, when he saw the wild man looking at him with such terribly big eyes, and saw him coming toward him, was frightened almost into spasms, and making a sudden dart managed this time to reach the stairs. He disappeared into the garret as precipitately as B'gob-sir had done out of the kitchen door.

When Mrs. McGlorrie—the wild man had never paid the slightest attention to her—at last found her tongue, she said to Gabrielle:

"Well, now that you've gone and brought this—this creatur' here, I'd like to know what you are going to do with him?"

"I'm goin' to sit up with him to-night," answered Gabrielle, "and see that he is kept comfortable till morning. I'll make a bed for him here by the stove, and watch him. It'll be the most comfortable bed the poor soul has had for many a long night, I should say."

"Well, Gabrielle, my child," said her father, "I will keep you company. I don't want to leave you here alone, and anyhow, I wish you to tell me all about how you came to get him."

Pierre hastened away to the shanty, swelled with the startling news he had for the shantymen, while Mrs. McGlorrie made her way into the garret to quiet the fears of her beloved Dennie; and the last mutterings heard as she ascended the stairs sounded something like this: "Hunting for tamarack gum, humph!"

XX.

GABRIELLE'S STORY.

GABRIELLE made a bed for her charge on the floor by the stove, and he curled down upon it much after the fashion of a stray dog. His heavy breathing soon showed that his fear had left him, and he was sleeping soundly.

It had been a trying day for Gabrielle, and when at last an occasional snore from the cot by the stove indicated that there was no further necessity for watching, she climbed impulsively on her father's knee, as she had so often done when a child, and, placing her arms around his neck, laid her head wearily on his broad shoulder.

"You're tired, my child," said her father, tenderly brushing back the dark locks from her forehead with his hand. "You'd better go to bed, dearie, and let me watch. I'll call you if needed."

"No, father, I don't want to go to bed to-night. I don't want to leave him—nor you either. I must talk to you, and tell you all about it. I'd have told you before, but I was afraid maybe you wouldn't want me to do it, and I couldn't bear to think of leavin' him out in the woods any longer. It was awful, father, when you think of it. And all these years—I don't know how many."

"But how did you know where he was?"

"Philander took me over there some weeks ago and showed me the spot."

"Philander?"

"Yes, father, but you mustn't blame him, you must blame me, for he didn't want to do it without you knowin' it. You needn't blame him, for it was all my fault."

"Fault! It was nobody's fault, child. I don't blame anybody—yes, I blame myself for not following the matter up as I should have done. Gabrielle, you mustn't talk to me about blaming you for anything you do. You know I never do that."

"I know, father, and I often wonder why you don't."

"Because, child, I know that you would never do anything wrong if you knew it."

She kissed his roughened cheek and nestled closer to him.

"But, father, I do act awful sometimes. Don't you remember that time last spring, down by the creek, when I was out in the canoe?" And some of the old roguish twinkle came back into her eyes.

"Yes, you little minx, I do remember it, for I was frightened terribly for a minute."

"I don't know what makes me do such things—but—I can't help it."

"I know you can't," said her father, with an amused smile, as he thought of some of her youthful capers; "and that's the reason I can't blame you. But you are getting older now, Gabrielle, and you mustn't do so many dangerous things. It would hurt me more than it would you if anything was to happen."

"I know I'm older, father, and I don't think I'll ever git into so much mischief again. I don't feel like I used to," she said, with more soberness. "I ain't a bit like I was a year ago. I never used to think what I was doing. But now it's different. All the while since

I have been goin' over to Fraser's Creek I haven't been easy a minute on account of doin' something on the sly from you; but I was afraid to tell you for fear you'd stop me."

"And that's what I should have done," he remarked, with almost a shudder, as he thought it all over. "But I'd have gone myself and got this old man. That was my intention after the trip I made over there, but I've been so busy with the logs."

"Well, then, I'm glad I didn't tell you, father," Gabrielle declared, "for you never could have got anywhere near him."

"Tell me how you managed it. The whole thing frightens me."

"It needn't frighten you. The old fellow wouldn't hurt a mouse—unless he wanted to catch it to eat; and I guess he'd eat almost anything. Why, he was so hungry; but I must tell you all about it. I wish Philander was here. He thought I was frightened out entirely; and I tell you the first glimpse I got when Philander and I peeped into the cave was enough to scare me most to death. I didn't expect to see anything, as Philander had said it wouldn't likely be in the cave, and when I looked in and seen the two great eyes starin' up at me I never got such a start. But when I thought it all over afterward, I was bound to see more of it, for I was sure it couldn't be very dangerous. I remembered you all telling how fast it would run away, and I thought by that it wouldn't be likely to hurt any one. And, anyhow, I couldn't rest till I had done something about it, for I couldn't bear the idea of leavin' it over there if it was human—and I knew it must be."

"You have got a bigger heart than all the rest of us," interposed her father fondly.

"So I picked on a nice bright day—it's an awful place over in there, isn't it?—and started to 'hunt for tamarack gum.'" In spite of her the mischief would come into her words and looks.

"You shouldn't have told mother that," protested her father; but the amused expression on his face relieved the protest of anything in the nature of a reprimand.

"What could I do, father? I either had to say something of that sort or give up goin', and I couldn't do that."

"Well, well, child, this is no time for me to be fault-finding. Tell your story."

"I crept up carefully to where I could see the crotched cedar, and could almost see the cave, and then hid myself and watched. I knew he must climb that cedar often, for I seen where he had made it smooth the first time I was over. It *was* lonesome, I tell you, and I stayed there so long that I b'lieved I'd have to give it up and come away. Then I thought I'd go down and climb the cedar and find out what I could from there. But right then I heard something movin' down in the hollow, and in a minute, sure enough, I seen him climbin' up the cedar. He got up as far as the crotch, and then looked carefully around the pine toward the cave. He glanced all over, as if suspicious of something, but couldn't see anything, and finally slid down the cedar out of sight. I watched in the direction of the cave, and soon I saw his head come bobbin' along, and in a minute I heard the stone grate over the mouth of the cave. I knew he was safe inside now, and I slipped down to the cedar and laid a piece of bread I had brought with me on the upturned root. Then I was afraid some animal might come along and

get it before he seen it, and I didn't know what to do."

"Why didn't you take it up to the mouth of the cave and leave it there?" suggested her father, with a peculiar inflection, at the same time watching her face closely.

"Well now, I—say, father, didn't he look jest *awful* out there in the woods?"

She snuggled up to him as it all came back to her, and he held her closer to his breast, with a smile.

"I don't see how you had the courage to do what you did, my child. It frightens me now when I think of it. Go on."

"So at last I climbed up the cedar and put the bread in the crotch, where he couldn't help seein' it next time he went up. Then I started for home, and as soon as I got my back turned on the spot I b'lieve I must have got more scared every minute, for I never hurried so fast in my life till I was well out of the woods. But I couldn't rest the next day till I had gone back again, and instead of waitin' so long to watch the cedar, I looked all around, and then climbed up to where I had left the bread. It was gone, and I put some more in its place. I was jest startin' to come down, when I seen his head pop out from behind a clump of bushes up by the cave. Instead of me watchin' him this time he had watched me. When he seen me he come right out from behind the bushes and stared at me. He put his hand up over his eyes to shade 'em, for all the world like you do sometimes, and I b'lieve I wasn't quite so scared of him on that account. He didn't seem much afraid of me, and didn't act a bit like all the rest of you said he would. He acted something

like he did to-night when he seen Dennie. It's funny how curious he goes on sometimes, and you'd almost imagine he thought he knew some of us. It made me a little uneasy to be stared at like that—though I wasn't so frightened as poor little Dennie was to-night—and so I crept down the tree and started away. I hadn't more'n got my back turned till he was at the foot of the cedar, and up it he went like a cat and grabbed the bread. Why, he could climb that tree in a quarter of the time I could. He didn't seem to care anything more about me—never looked which direction I went—but the way he eat that bread paid me for all my trouble. Father, don't you think it's awful to have anything so hungry as that?" she suddenly asked, as she glanced pathetically down at the sleeping figure by the stove.

"Gabrielle, I wish all the world had your heart, my child. There wouldn't be much suffering, I'm sure."

"When I seen how hungry he was, I took more stuff with me next time, and I'm afraid the last week I've robbed mother's cupboard awfully." She smiled a little as she continued. "I heard her scoldin' Dennie the other day for piecin' so much between meals, but he denied it, and I didn't blame him."

"After I had gone several times in that way, he got so he would watch for me, and at last one day he couldn't wait till I got away, but came right down the path within a few yards of me, as I was putting the food on the root of the cedar. He didn't look nearly so ugly and bad when I was close to him, and—somehow he puts me in mind, every once in awhile, of—oh, well, now I won't say what I was goin' to, for you might not like it, and anyway I know you'd laugh at me—but—"

"Why, say it, my child," insisted her father, surprised at her sudden confusion. "I won't laugh at you, child."

"Well, I was goin' to say that—that sometimes he makes me think of *you*. The way he put his hand over his eyes that first day was jest like you. Of course he don't *look* a bit like you," she hastened to assure him, emphasizing it with a kiss, "but when he walked down the path toward the cedar there was something about him that took away every bit of fright I had for him. Before I stopped to think what I was doin' I reached out a piece of meat, and he come up and took it out of my hand, and stood there and—and—guzzled it. There ain't any other word for it, father. You never saw a human being eat like he did. When the meat was swallowed, I gave him a piece of bread and butter, and I kept on feedin' him till all the stuff was gone. When he seen there was no more food he began looking at me in that same funny way of his, and I couldn't make out what it meant. I spoke to him, and he looked as if he wanted to talk, but didn't seem to understand what I said, and wasn't able to say anything himself. He mumbled a little, like he did here to-night to Pierre, though not nearly so much. But the way he acted was the funniest part of all. He seemed to want to come closer to me, and made such queer motions with his hands. I sat on the root of the cedar watchin' what he would do, and first thing I knew he came up close to me and reached out and touched my hair."

Bonaventure felt Gabrielle give a little shiver as she said this; at least he thought he did, and yet he was not exactly sure that it was not himself that had shivered. He certainly felt like it. Gabrielle went on:

"He mumbled a little, and then begun to rub his

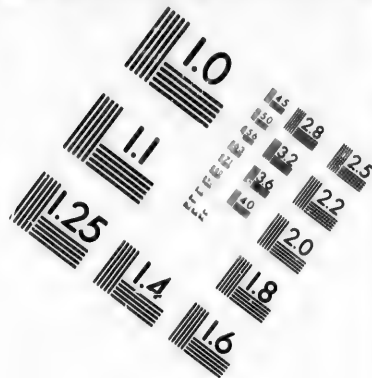
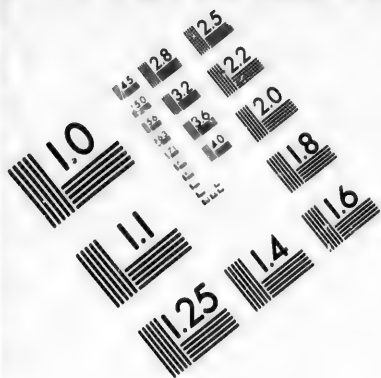
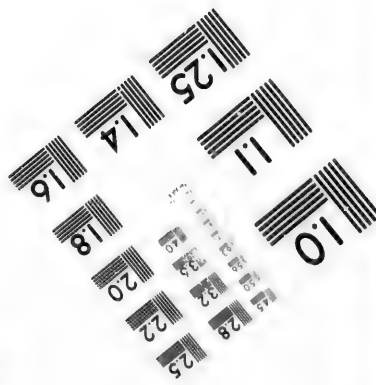
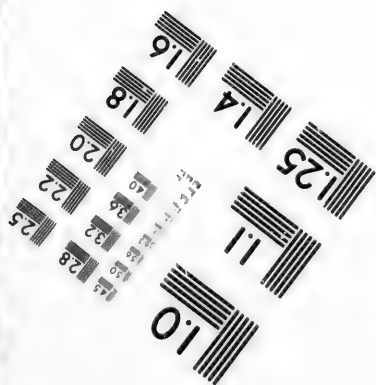
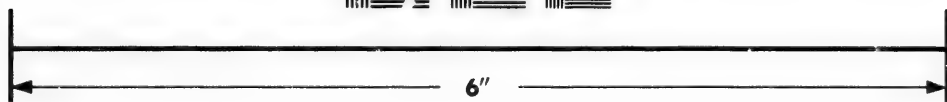
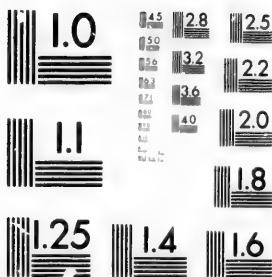


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hand down over my shoulder and along my arm. I tell you what it is, father, that was about the tightest place I ever was in. I don't know how I managed to keep from screamin' and runnin' away. It made my flesh creep in spite of me, and I couldn't help movin' jest a little as he went on feelin' of me. But the minute I stirred the least bit he jerked away his hand, kind o' scared, and stepped back. I seen he was as much afraid of me as I was of him, and maybe more, so I contrived to git my heart back where it ought to be again. I tried after that to coax him along with me, but I couldn't make him understand what I wanted, and I had to leave him for that day. When I went again he was waitin' for me at the foot of the cedar, and I fed him a little and then walked away and held out a piece of meat to him, and he followed after me till he got it. He stood still till he had swallowed it, and came after me to git some more. In this way I got him quite a distance from the cave, but when the food was all gone he wouldn't go any further. I stayed with him awhile, and talked to him, and tried to persuade him to come with me, but he didn't seem to know what I meant. I was about discouraged, but when I started to go away I could see he didn't want me to leave him, and after I had gone a few rods I heard him comin' after me. I thought I had him then sure, but the minute we reached the clearin' he stooped, and wouldn't leave the woods. The next time I went—that was day before yesterday—I stayed away till later than usual, and by the time I got nicely into the woods I met him comin' to meet me. This time I managed to git him out as far as the road, but the first sleigh he saw driving along he run like the wind. I hadn't fed him nearly so much this time, for I was

keepin' most of the food to coax him with, and I knew he would be hungry. I stayed away yesterday on purpose—anyway it was an awful long walk over there every day or two."

"I don't see how you ever managed to go so often. You must have been very tired at night, after coming home," said her father.

"Oh, I didn't mind that at all." And then, with a long breath, she admitted, "I'm glad it's all over, though. Well, when I went there to-day I found him in the edge of the woods, and I suppose the poor old fellow had watched all day yesterday for me. There was no mistake about him being glad to see me. I didn't go till late, so that by the time I got him out to the main road it was gittin' dusk. That was what I wanted. I didn't feed him very much, as I meant to keep him hungry. Whenever he acted scared and looked like runnin' I held him by the arm and talked to him. The minute I spoke he was all right, and after awhile when he heard anything he would kind o' tremble and keep close to me, like you seen him to-night at the supper-table. I don't b'lieve any one else could 'a' done anything with him. Poor old fellow, he jest seemed to lose all confidence in himself when he was some distance on the road, and looked to me to take care of him. I hurried him along as fast as I could after that, and finally got him here to the door. I thought he was goin' to break away and run when I brought him up near the house, but I talked away to him and he came with me like a dog. There, you know it all now," she said, suddenly breaking off, "and I've got him here; and, father, I don't want to ever let him git away again to live in that terrible place.

Somehow there is something about him that makes me feel near to him, and though he does look most awful in that rough, shaggy suit—hasn't he got the skins fixed together, though, in a funny way? I don't believe I could ever tie anything up so snug and comfortable as that. You must look at it in the morning. Pieces of wolf-skin, and fox-skin, and all sorts of things are fastened together with strings stripped from some kind of bark. But what I was goin' to say was, that, with all his rough looks, I can't help feelin' that—well, what I mean is that I couldn't bear to think of him ever havin' to suffer any more like he has done. It's awful, father; and I want to ask you if we can' keep him here. I'm sure he won't do any one the least bit of harm, and he needn't be any bother, for I'll promise to look after him myself, and I'll do the cookin'—I'll work hard—I'll do anything, father, so't mother won't be troubled with him in any way, if you'll only let me keep him."

"Why, Gabrielle, child, what are you going on in this way for? As if I'd ever have the heart to turn the old man out. You may do as you wish with him, for surely he is yours—only I'd like you to get some different clothes for him," he added, looking down at the uncouth heap by the fire.

"Oh, I'll 'tend to all that," Gabrielle replied, "when I get him so he'll wear 'em."

"You mean when you get him tamed."

"Why, father, I didn't think you'd joke like that about it," she said, looking at him rather surprised.

"I don't know as I was joking. Well, never mind. I hope we'll know more about him some day—know something of his past life. He must have a queer story, if he could only tell it."

They both fell into a quiet study for some minutes, and then Bonaventure said:

"Now, child, you'd better go to bed and get some sleep. I'll watch him."

"Father, I'd rather not leave either of you to-night. Somehow I want to stay with you."

"Then, dearie, go to sleep where you are."

"But I'm afraid I'll be heavy on your knee."

"Ah, have I ever thought you heavy when I was holding you?" he asked, pressing her fondly to his breast.

"Father, there isn't another man in all the world like you." Her left arm was thrown across his chest, and the hand lay over his right shoulder. Her head sank upon the other side, and the beautiful dark hair fell in profusion over his arm. Soon she was fast asleep.

Bonaventure sat and gazed long and thoughtfully into the shimmering streaks of light from the stove. He gazed, while the fire burned lower and lower, till at last but one faint glimmer held his eye. What he thought no one ever knew—what he felt he scarcely knew himself.

XXI.

PIERRE AND THE WILD MAN.

IT may be imagined that there was great excitement around the Nonquon when the news spread that Gabrielle had captured the wild man. People had been more or less superstitious about him ever since it became known that there was such a creature in existence. The majority had insisted at first that there could not be a wild man in that vicinity, and made sport of those who claimed to have seen him; but when one after another stated emphatically that they had caught passing glimpses of him, many of the people finally admitted that there must be something in it. And yet no one cared to investigate the matter, so it had drifted along with an occasional humorous allusion to it, much after the manner of B'gob-sir's previous taunting display the night Philander had first told about it in front of Bonaventure's. Now when the partially mythical reports had developed into actual facts, and the subject of all this talk was assuredly a human being, and was safely housed at the McGlorries, curiosity ran high. Gabrielle was the heroine of the hour. She paid little attention to what the people said—that did not interest her—but she watched carefully, day by day, the changes in the old man. And surely no human being ever changed more rapidly than he. By the time he had been there a week he had fallen into the ways of the household to a wonderful

degree. He had on a proper suit of clothes, he showed not the slightest inclination to run away, and he was willing to eat at regular intervals. True he retained many of the manners of the woods. He could not be induced to sleep in a bed, but snuggled down by the stove every night. It seemed more convenient for him to eat with his fingers than any other way, and he could not tolerate a hat on his shaggy head. Whenever sitting or lying, he never rose without involuntarily ducking his head as if afraid of striking it against something—a pathetic memory of the cave. When left alone for any time, he would pick up the first sharp instrument he could get and begin scratching on the whitewashed surface of the logs forming the walls of the room. In this way he had made many queer figures along the wall, and Gabrielle was completely puzzled at this, till one day Philander happened to see them and told her they were the counterpart of those on the wall of the cave.

He was most interesting whenever Pierre came around. It was soon evident that he understood the French language, and he could even speak a few words that Pierre could grasp. It was most amusing to see the emphatic gestures of Pierre when trying to lead the old man out into a general conversation, and get him to relate something about himself.

"What are you saying to him?" asked Bonaventure one day as they were all sitting around, and Pierre was laboring with the extreme vividness of his nature.

"I ax him," said Pierre, impressively, "af he got a waf."

"Oh, you fool, Pierre!" broke in Gabrielle, in disgust. But evidently the old man understood Pierre better

than she thought, for he was trying to say something. Pierre listened intently, and then turned triumphantly to the others:

"I tol' you—dass all right. He know. He say he hain't got no waf. Bot—hol' on—wass dat?" he suddenly asked, forgetting his French, as the old man was stammering something, and motioning with his hand.

"A-h-h-h." And, after listening a moment more, he continued: "I teenk he say he got a leetle boy—'bout so high," measuring a short distance above his knee. "I teenk—wall, I dunno."

"Oh, you don't know anything," said Gabrielle, whose burning desire to learn something definite about the old man outstripped her judgment in giving Pierre his just due. She knew the old man had no little boy.

But Pierre was able to understand more and more of his talk as time went on, and some of it turned out extremely interesting, as we shall see.

XXII.

ONE SUNDAY NIGHT.

THERE was one individual in the neighborhood who found it difficult to tell whether he was going to like or to hate the old man. He was certain that he should do either one or the other, for it appeared to him that his interests were to be largely affected by his advent. That was Donald. He was inclined to look favorably on him in one way, for it gave him an excuse for frequent visits to the McGlorries, and Donald always required some excuse other than the true one for visiting the home of the little bewitching, black-eyed French girl. He lacked the courage to court Gabrielle in an open-handed manner, as he should have done, and looked upon any unusual occurrence which brought him into her presence as a fortunate chance. In every fiber of his nature he was reticent and bashful. This was doubly emphasized when Gabrielle was around. He was probably a little afraid of her; in any event he felt more awkward, and seemed to make more mistakes—so he considered them—when her eyes were upon him. He could not quite understand her, any more than could many others around the Nonquon, but he loved her—there was no doubt about that. He had not been permitted to see much of her since that last night of the revival, and when he did see her it was always when some one else was present. He had not the ingenuity of the ordinary lover to plan means of

seeing the object of his love alone, so he had to put up with the meager satisfaction of an occasional chance meeting. And, truth to tell, these chance meetings of late had been productive of much doubt and foreboding in his mind. He watched closely for some evidence that her manner on the evening of their walk home from the revival had meant something more than a passing fancy of hers, but he was disappointed; worse than this, he was almost discouraged. It seemed she ignored him more than ever. She scarcely ever spoke to him unless it was absolutely necessary, and appeared to be so interested in the old man she had rescued that she had no thought for the Scotch boy at all. This was the point which raised the idea in Donald's mind as to whether it would not be the proper thing for him to hate the old fellow. Had there been a young man in the case, he certainly should have been aroused; and what appeared to be the very crowning climax of his trouble, a young man did appear in the case, and Donald was aroused.

The young man was none other than the Rev. Amos Springle, the very one whom Donald would have selected as his most dangerous rival. He had heard it circulated quite freely among the gossips that the minister was in the habit, each Sunday, of putting in more of his time at the McGlorries than was absolutely necessary or consistent with his duties as pastor. The fact was not to be mistaken that Mr. Springle took an unusual interest in the French girl, even though she had withstood the fervent appeals of Prosper on the memorable night of the revival. Possibly he took an interest in her *because* she had withstood those appeals. In any event he unwisely set the tongues in his congrega-

tion to wagging by his repeated visits at Bonaventure's.

When Donald became aware of the frequency of these visits—reports had been greatly exaggerated to him—he was in despair at first, and then, sagely shaking his good Scotch head, he resolved on a plan: "I'll go down the next time he comes, and I'll see for myself. I'd be a fool to let him get Gabrielle away from me, for he couldn't begin to love her like I do. How could he, when he's only known her so short a time? Why, I've seen her day in and out for so long now that I know her every action. I know just how she walks, how she runs, how she drops down on one knee to tie little Dennie's cap-strings under his chin, how she buttons his coat snug up to his neck, how she tucks his mittens under his coat-sleeves, how she makes him warm and comfortable whenever he goes out with her; and how she does the same thing for her father, only she has to reach up instead of stooping down—and I'm sure I don't know which way she looks best. Oh," he continued, with more feeling, "I've seen her do all these things so many times, and I've seen her moving around the house helping her mother, and it always seemed she could do her work in half the time other folks could; and then I've seen her bending over little Allie Farley when she was sick one time, with such a look on her face as if she'd rather have been sick herself; and I've seen her climb upon her father's knee, and put her arms around his neck, and—oh, I can't bear it! I can't think of her marrying any one else. No one could love her like I do. This preacher, what does he know about her? He never could love her as she ought to be loved; he doesn't know her well enough. I'm going down next time he comes." And he did.

It was the following Sunday, and the minister had driven straight to Bonaventure's before service, with the ostensible purpose, as he said, of seeing how the old man had been getting along since his last visit to the Nonquon. It seemed . . . at the old man was proving a rather prolific source of excuse for Gabrielle's suitors. Mrs. McGlorrie insisted on the minister having his horse put out and taking tea with them before church. After supper Dennie and his mother accompanied the minister to church, leaving Gabrielle and her father home with the old man. In the course of the evening Donald dropped in, and he and Bonaventure were busily engaged talking about the work at the shanty when the others came from church. Gabrielle had busied herself with the old man all evening, and had shunned Donald so pointedly that it stung him severely, and set him to thinking harder than ever. He was determined to watch closely the relations between her and the minister. Instantly on the arrival of the churchgoers she was all smiles, and as full of life as a cricket. Donald's heart sank with a terrible sense of despair when he noticed the sudden change that had come over her. The case had gone farther even than he had been led to believe by the gossips, and he was almost desperate. He had never seen her act so bewitchingly charming as she was acting now; and when he thought that all of these charms were displayed for the benefit of some one else, who was almost like a stranger to them all, he could scarcely contain himself. And the minister, too, was in the best of spirits. Donald thought he had never heard any one talk so brilliantly as he did—and he hated him for it. Why could *he* not have the gift of speech in this way, so that he might prove attractive,

instead of being obliged to sit dejectedly in one corner and feel himself completely humiliated and ignored? It was the darkest hour he had ever known, and he was quite appalled to find how seriously the thing affected him. He never knew till then how utterly unhappy life would be without Gabrielle. He never knew how much he loved her. It was like tearing asunder his own heartstrings. He blamed himself for not having pushed his suit with all the vehemence of his soul months ago, before this other man came along, with his polish, his glitter, and his winning tongue. It was terrible to feel as Donald felt then.

When it came time for the minister to go, Bonaventure went out to hitch his horse to the cutter, and Donald rushed after him to help. He could not tolerate the idea of remaining in the house another minute. He felt stifled and desperate, and was glad of something to take him out into the open air. When the horse was driven up to the house, the minister was standing at the doorstep putting on his driving-gloves. Gabrielle and her mother had come to the door to see him off. The night was beautifully clear and moonlight, and the bells jingled rhythmically to the tread of the horse.

"Oh, what a lovely horse!" exclaimed Gabrielle.

"Wouldn't you like a drive after him?" asked the minister, delighted at her praise.

"'Course I would."

He looked around a moment, quickly studying the situation. He was bent on having her see what a really fine horse he had, and yet it was hardly appropriate for a minister to be seen driving through the village Sunday evening after church with a young lady as his only companion.

"Jump in, Mr. McFarlane," he said to Donald, "and we three will go for a short drive. The cutter is large enough. Get on your wraps," he continued, turning to Gabrielle. Away she went, and soon came out with her most becoming winter hood tied tightly under her chin. She looked prettier than ever in the moonlight with that hood on as she tripped lightly down the steps and into the cutter. This was wormwood and gall to Donald, but he could do nothing else than climb clumsily—he thought he never had been so clumsy before—in with the others. It seemed to him that he was in some manner aiding the minister's suit, and he had never seemed so helpless in his life.

"I'll bring her back in a little while," sang out Mr. Springle to Bonaventure and his wife as he drove away.

"Bring *her* back," said Donald to himself. "So you've forgotten already that there's anybody else with you. Well, I wish there wasn't, that's all."

What a jolly drive it was, for two of them. Mr. Springle and Gabrielle chatted away and laughed, and she praised his horse, and he praised her judgment, and they both seemed perfectly oblivious to Donald, who sat fuming. He sincerely wished the cutter would upset, or something happen to stop this horrible nightmare. He would not have cared much if they had all been injured badly. Oh, hold on—all but Gabrielle. He would not have a hair of her head injured to save the nation. But he wished he might be hurt some himself—he thought it would feel good to be hurt; and that preacher—well, he would not have been a bit sorry to see his nose bleeding, or something that would make him look ridiculous, and put him at a disadvantage.

They had driven far over the hill to the south of the village, when suddenly Gabrielle said they must go back.

"But I can't turn around here, on account of the snow-banks," said the minister. "I'll have to take you a little farther."

"Oh, goodness!" exclaimed Gabrielle, "these banks lead away down past Jonas Wicklow's. We can never ride that far. Donald and I will get out and walk back."

"Oh no, I can't allow that," said the preacher, suddenly alarmed at the idea of losing her society so soon. "It wouldn't be treating you very nicely to invite you for a drive, and then compel you to walk home. I'll try to turn around here."

"No, no," insisted Gabrielle. "You could never get the cutter around without tippin' it over, and I'd be awful sorry to see you get into any trouble on our account. No, stop the horse, and we'll step out here," and before he could offer any protest she had gently touched the lines so that the horse halted, and the next instant she was in the road bidding him good-night.

What he thought as he drove away no one ever knew. Probably he wished that she used better grammar, and that she was cut out more after the manner of an ideal minister's wife, but if these thoughts did enter his mind, it was probably not difficult to dispel them with the memory of her eyes, her hair, her figure, and her spirits. In any event, he drove a long distance with the lines hanging loosely over the dashboard, and his eyes cast abstractedly at the robe on his lap.

What Donald thought as he started home by Gabrielle's side may be somewhat conjectured by his first remark.

"I wish he *had* upset!"

"What!" said Gabrielle, looking up at him quickly.

"I say I wish he had upset."

"Why, whatever do you mean? That's a nice way to talk about anybody, 'specially any one like Mr. Springle."

"Oh, I *know* you think there isn't another man on earth like him," he said, rather bitterly.

"Well," she remarked, in feigned surprise, "don't you think he's nice? I thought—"

"Oh, what you think about him and what I think are two entirely different things," he broke in. "Seems we never could agree to think alike about anything, anyhow, so I suppose it's all right whatever you may think about him."

"Well, if that ain't—why, whatever is the matter with you to-night?"

"No more the matter with me to-night than ever there was."

"Well, I never knew you to act like this before."

"Because I've always been too much of a fool." His Scotch blood surely was up at last.

"Fool! Well, if you are wiser to-night than you ever was before, I don't know but—but—I'd rather—"

"You'd rather have me a fool all my life, would you?" he interposed, savagely. "I suppose you would, but I'm not going to be, I can tell you that."

It was well that they were walking with the moon behind them so Donald could not see Gabrielle's face, for he probably would have been much puzzled by it. She held her head demurely down as she walked along, and studiously avoided looking up at him. He interpreted this as an evidence that she wished to shun him as much as possible, and could have sworn to himself

that she was then and there comparing him with that puppet of a preacher to his immense disadvantage. This made him boil more than ever.

"Gabrielle!" he broke out again, excitedly, "you no doubt think he is the very pink of perfection. Probably he *can* talk more politely than I can; probably he *has* whiter hands, and a neater turned necktie, but—he—"

"*He?*" she interposed. "Who are you talking about?"

"Talking about! As if you didn't know! I'm talking about that young sprig of a minister—that's who I'm talking about—and you knew it well enough."

"I don't see how I could know it. You never said." This in a low, subdued voice, altogether unlike her usual retort. He thought she was poking fun at him. Suddenly he halted and looked at her, with his lip quivering. They were just passing through the village, and he choked back the utterance which rose to his lips, for fear some one might hear it. They walked on in silence till the sight of Gabrielle's gate drove Donald to desperation.

"Gabrielle," he began, with more decision in his voice, but less vehemence, "I've something to say to you to-night. It may do no good, and I don't suppose it will—but I'm going to say it. You and I have known each other a long time, and you know what I think of you—"

"You never told me," she murmured, in the strangest little voice he had ever heard from her lips. His heart almost jumped into his throat for an instant, and he glanced quickly at her in an inquiring way. But Donald was a sad blunderer when Gabrielle was in the

question, and he now added one more blunder to the others. He was so desperately dejected that it was easy for him to think she was again making fun of him; but he managed to keep back the outburst that rose within him, and went on, with a little more bitterness in his tone:

"That Mr. Springle may be all very fine—I don't care to say anything against him—but, Gabrielle, he hasn't got it in him to love you as I do. How could he? He hasn't known you so long as I have. He hasn't seen so much of you. He may think he loves you, and you may think he does, but it isn't like my love. It *can't* be. He has other things to think of, while I have nothing but you. He must think of his sermons, and his church work, and his congregation. He must study how he can please them; and there's lots of his congregation that he couldn't please very well by marrying you. I've thought it all over to-night—I've thought what might happen—I've thought that perhaps he would get you to—to—thinking a good deal of him, and then in the end yield to the influence of some of his swell church folks down at Port Rowen, and not marry you. I've thought of that, and how you'd feel, and what the folks around here would say about you; and, Gabrielle, as I'm alive, I've sworn that I'd thrash the man that would treat you like that. I'd do more than that—I couldn't help it—I'd kill him!" growing more excited and in earnest, and not looking at Gabrielle at all. "I'd throttle the man who would trifle with you, Gabrielle—I'd throttle him till his lying tongue dangled out of his mouth."

"*Donald!*" screamed Gabrielle, suddenly throwing her arms passionately about his neck, and looking up

into his face with streaming eyes. "My darling, darling, don't!" She was trembling like a frightened fawn in his strong arms, as he began raining frenzied kisses upon her face. That one impulsive instant had told him more than his blundering senses had been able to learn through all the months that were past; and as the moonlight fell on that upturned face of hers, it showed him a new light in the dark eyes that filled his soul to overflowing.

XXIII.

DONALD AND GABRIELLE.

WHOSE right is it to say what happened in the next half-hour after that sudden revelation in the moonlight? Surely not ours. At the end of that time they were walking slowly, arm in arm, back and forth between the gate and the house, with apparently no inclination to part. At last Gabrielle suddenly started and said:

"Oh my, it must be getting late. I'd forgot all about the time."

"So had I," said Donald. "Anyhow, it's all the same to me now—early or late—it makes no difference."

"But, Donald, dear, I must go in. I'm afraid we've stayed out an awful long time. We've said so many things, you know."

"Yes, and I'd like to say 'em all over again."

"Is that because we didn't say 'em right?" she asked, looking up at him archly.

"No, no, you little witch. I'd like to say them over again so I could remember 'em."

"We'll remember them, Donald. We'll never forget to-night; and if we don't say the same things again, we'll say better ones."

"That's so," assented Donald. "Everything you say is better than what you said before."

"You've learned to praise me very soon," she said, pinching his arm. "Why didn't you do that long ago? I like it."

"I was a big blundering fool—that's why."

"Now I'll put my hand over your mouth if you don't stop that."

"Then I'll kiss it if you do."

"Well, hadn't you better kiss me good-night, and go?"

"I'll kiss you willingly enough, but I won't say good-night till you've told me something else I want to know."

"Well, what is it, quick? I must go in."

"If you've loved me all along, as you say—if it was you who put the oatmeal-water in the field for me when I was cradling against Miles Tryne, if you've done so many of these nice things on the sly from me—why is it you treated the minister so very nicely when I was around this evening?"

She looked up at him with that old familiar roguish expression that became her so well.

"'Cause I wanted you to feel like I did when I heard about the Scotch girl."

"The Scotch girl? What do you mean?" asked Donald, knitting his brow.

"Never you mind, old blindy. I made you feel that way, anyhow, only you felt worse than I ever thought you would; and, oh, Donald! I'm so happy—I'm so happy! Now I *must* say good-night. You'll come down to-morrow evening, won't you?"

No need to say that Donald promised.

The days flew rapidly after that—how rapidly only those who have been in love can tell. As with most love affairs, there was a certain degree of disaffection among some of the parties most interested. Mrs. McFarlane and Mrs. McGlorrie were placed in a diffi-

cult position. That affair of the turnips was a black-letter day in their history, and was not to be forgotten. The influence of the revival on Mrs. McGlorrie had passed away, and she saw no incentive for making peace with the Scotch woman. Truth to tell, she had not looked with favor on Donald's suit, more especially since the new minister had promised so likely a catch. She had begun building castles on the possibility of having him for a son-in-law, and this sudden turn of affairs had proved a cruel blow.

As for Mrs. McFarlane, she was austere and stubborn, as usual. The only consoling thought was that Donald had proved victorious, and she could not help inwardly admiring Gabrielle for her selection. It flattered her somewhat to think that the Methodist "meenister" had been rejected for her Donald; and besides, she remembered what Gabrielle had said about the potash kettle. So her final reflection was that she "could abide the girl a wee bit—but that mither o' hers—ugh!"

Donald and Gabrielle were walking up from the village—he had *chanced* to meet her there—when he said to her, with a sly Scotch twinkle in his eye, "What are we going to do about your mother and mine?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, you know they don't get on well with each other."

Gabrielle could scarce repress a smile as she remembered the sight of her mother's kitchen when she came in after the turnip episode.

"Oh, they'll get on all right in time. We'll make 'em like each other." And she spoke with the careless

conviction that anything was easy of accomplishment where Donald and she were concerned. Then she looked up at him more earnestly, and said: "Donald, I'm going to make your mother think more of me than she does. It's all my fault that she doesn't like me. I'm meaner'n dirt sometimes, and I don't see how anybody can think anything of me. I don't see how you could. I guess you must be a little soft."

Donald was willing to be called soft under the circumstances, but he did not agree with Gabrielle.

"I can't see any of your meanness, as you call it, and I don't want you to talk like that about yourself."

"But I am, Donald, and I can't help it. I say the meanest things before I ever think. Why, look at the way I abuse poor old B'gob-sir—I even give him that nickname; and I tease him sometimes till I'm ashamed of myself. First thing I know something pops into my head, then it's onto my tongue, then out it comes, and the mischief's done. I think it over afterward, and I feel like crawlin' on my hands and knees to the person I've abused and takin' it all back a thousand times. Donald," and she impulsively took his arm in both her hands, and looked up into his face in a serious way, while her voice fell almost to a whisper, "when-ever I make a blunder and say a mean thing to you, jest forget the mean thing, and think of me crawlin' on my hands and knees to you, for that's what I'll want to be doin' next minute."

He had never seen her in such a meek mood before, and this new phase of her nature touched him very tenderly.

"Bless your pretty heart," he exclaimed, "don't talk to me in that way. Blunder! Why, you never

made a blunder in your life. Think of me! I'm the one that blunders. Seems to me I've done nothing but blunder when you were near me ever since I knew you. Why, the very way I won you at last was only a big blunder on my part. I didn't know I was doing it. I simply blundered onto my happiness. Think of it!"

"Oh, Donald, that was a lovely blunder," she said, smiling through moist eyes. "I wish mine would turn out as well as that."

So may we all wish.

XXIV.

BACK TO LIFE.

AS time went on Pierre and the hermit, as he was now known, were able to communicate more freely with each other. Besides this, a very decided change had taken place in the faculties of the wild man. He could properly be called by that name no longer. He began to come to himself, and to construct a trembling bridge across the chasm made by his long hermitage. He slowly struggled to arrange matters definitely in his mind, and the struggle was not altogether in vain. He was finally able to assign the people about him to their proper relationship, and to realize their identity. At first they had seemed to him merely abstract beings, who fed him and made him warm, and who would not injure him. To be sure, he had been differently impressed by these different beings from the beginning, as we have seen, but his remnant of a mind appeared to be in confusion, and the impressions seemed wholly instinctive. Certain things and sounds struck responsive chords in his nature, as, for instance, the speech of Pierre, the sight of Dennie, and above all, the voice and presence of Gabrielle. But the response had been such as might be expected from a well-disposed dog, who had been lost for a long time and afterward found himself with persons who somehow appeared familiar to him. There was no intelligent reasoning between the past and the present, any

more than there would have been with the dog. In fact his long isolation from humanity had perceptibly dulled many of his human attributes, and he had drifted perilously near to a total eclipse of his finer mental faculties.

It required some time for him to right himself about and obtain his proper bearings. It called for many mental gymnastics, to jump hither and thither over his former experiences, and weave together the tangled skeins so that he might reason logically as to events and their connection with himself. He had suffered a mild form of insanity—a sort of blank-mindedness—as the result of his hermitage, and his awakening to a proper realization of things, though not so sudden as with some insane people, was certainly as decisive. He could be seen sitting for hours at a time in a dazed sort of study, from which he would sometimes awaken with a start and look curiously about him. On one of these occasions Gabrielle was watching him closely, as she had noticed that he was more restless of late, and thought that something unusual was passing in his mind. He was in his favorite nook by the south wall, where the April sun fell full upon him, and he had been there so long that Gabrielle had almost concluded it best to arouse him from his reverie. Just as she was about to do this, she noticed some undue agitation stirring him. He began nervously to work his hands and mutter to himself. He shook his head slowly from side to side, as if turning something in his mind, and finally jumped to his feet with much decision and looked around. As soon as he saw Gabrielle, he asked for Pierre. He seemed to realize that no one but Pierre could understand him.

That individual had assumed a great importance in the vicinity by this time, on account of being the only available interpreter for the old man. When informed by Dennie, whom Gabrielle had sent across to the shanty, that "Gabe's old feller" wanted to see him, he precipitately dropped everything and marched off with the air of a man who was badly needed almost everywhere.

When the old man saw him coming he immediately ran to meet him and commenced talking very earnestly. Pierre listened with a great deal of gravity at first, but soon began to take on some of the old man's excitement. Finally he turned to Gabrielle, with wide-open eyes, and said:

"Wall! By golly, he remember! He ax me raght off hees name. He live one tam—"

"What's his name?" asked Gabrielle, unable to contain herself.

"Hees name Baptiste Chaquette."

"That's French, isn't it? I wish father was here." She was growing wildly excited.

"Franch! Didn't I tol' you? I ax you raght off dat odder night w'en he cam. Deedn't I tol' you he spick Franch? Yaas—wass dat?" suddenly turning to the old man, who was trying to get his ear. After listening a moment, he again turned to Gabrielle with the remark that the old man would like to have his things brought from the cave.

"Of course he shall have 'em," said Gabrielle, touched somewhat tenderly by the appeal. "I do wish father was here. I can't stand it till he comes in from the shanty. Where's Philander, I wonder? Where's—oh, the men are never around when they're wanted. I

wish I was a man." She was impetuous and rattle-headed, as usual. "Tell him we'll get the things for him as soon as we can, and ask him how he come to be over in that awful place, and who he is, and where he came from, and who his folks are, and if they know where he is, and—and—what are you standin' there for, starin' at me with your mouth wide open as if you didn't hear me? Pierre, you're an awful fool when you want to be," she concluded, in disgust.

Pierre may well be excused for some slight inability to grasp the present situation in all of its bearings, for the difficulty of harmonizing the answers of one individual who was obliged to stop and think and stammer a great deal with the questions of another who required half a dozen answered at once was enough to appall even a better man than Pierre.

But the whole matter came out in due time, and though Gabrielle did not learn as much on the present occasion as she wished, yet she was well rewarded for waiting when the story was finally told. This event happened an evening or two later. Gabrielle had sent over to the cave the day following the old man's request, and had all of its queer contents brought home. The sight of these things—most of them yellow with age—stirred the old man strangely, and seemed to recall many memories of bygone days. One thing especially, an old frayed letter, was carefully scanned, and placed with a sigh in his pocket.

The night of the story several people had dropped in at Bonaventure's to listen to Pierre's interpretation, the old man having promised that he would tell them all the facts of his life as accurately as he could remember them. The group consisted of Philander, Donald,

Bonaventure and his family, and old B'gob-sir, who had entirely recovered from his fright at the wild man.

The story is too long to allow Pierre to tell it in his own theatrical, disjointed manner, and its recital must be left to the old man himself. Seated in the midst of his listeners, with the flickering fire-light shining through the cracks of the stove and darting across his roughened face with brighter illumination than that made by the feeble candle on the table, he began.

XXV.

THE OLD MAN'S STORY.

“**I** AM French. My name is Baptiste Chaquette. I was born in Lower Canada, near the old village of Sorel, between Montreal and Quebec. I was a happy youth, light-hearted and thoughtless. I had a companion, Leon Bolio, and we were constantly together. Everyone said that nothing could separate Leon and I. But something finally did separate us. We fell in love with the same girl, and became deadly enemies. Angelique Demerse was her name. She was the fairest creature that ever smiled on a suitor.” Here he cast one of those curious glances of his in the direction of Gabrielle. It was something of the same scrutiny that he had given her when he first saw her in the woods. Then he went on:

“Angelique gave her heart to me, and we were married. Everyone said that Leon would kill me, but he didn't do that. He dare not. He was no match for me in any contest. I was quicker, stronger, and heavier—always had been as we were boys together—so that he did not dare to attack me openly. Had he killed me by stealth, the villagers would have killed him, and he knew it. They said we both had a fair field, and I had won, and there was an end of it. But he did something worse than to kill me. The rankling in his heart grew deeper and deeper as he saw how happy Angelique and I were. People told him he had

better go away from Sorel if he did not like to see us living together, but he said no, he would not go away, he would stay and make us unhappy yet. And he did make us unhappy. We had a little son—a little boy—”

“Deedn’t I tol’ you?” cried Pierre, stopping short in his interpretation and turning to Gabrielle. “Deedn’t I tol’ you he got leetle boy? I tol’ you about—”

“Oh, shut your mouth,” snapped Gabrielle. “Do shut your mouth about what you told me, and go on and tell us what he tells you.”

Pierre subsided, and the old man continued:

“We had a little boy, the brightest-eyed and burliest little fellow in all the world. How we loved him! It’s only a memory with me now,” he said, looking abstractedly into the fire, “but what a memory! Angelique must love a thing with all her heart or not at all. She loved this little boy more than anything else on earth, except me, perhaps, and I—well, I worshiped him. It frightens me now to think how much I loved him; but I couldn’t help it, he was so like—so like Angelique and—me. He grew up till he could talk, and play, and be happy, and then one day we missed him. Search through the village as we would, we could not find him. Leon disappeared at the same time, and then we knew it all. He had stolen our little boy. Well he saw what would hurt us most. You don’t know what that means, to have your little boy stolen—and such a boy! We thought he would cross the line into the States, and we went there. Then we searched in all directions, but never got a clue.

“Angelique—well, I don’t want to think of Angelique. It broke her poor heart. She lived on in a sort of way,

but was no longer the Angelique of before. She would sigh in her sleep, and reach out her arms, and call for her little boy. That was awful for me. Once she dreamed she saw him. 'Oh, Baptiste! I've got him! I've got him! He's come back! Our little—' Then she awoke, and—oh! I can't tell about that!" He suddenly stopped, and leaning forward, let his face drop into his hands, and with his elbows resting on his knees, swayed back and forth for some moments in silence. Then he slowly raised himself, and looking absently at the ceiling, he continued:

"She died soon after that, and we buried her, and I was alone. That was worse than anything yet—to lose Angelique. People were kind to me, but I could hear them say as I passed them on the street, 'He'll go insane.' They little knew. It would have been a relief to go insane. I could have forgotten then, but now I could do nothing but remember. One day, years after, a letter came to me. This is it," producing the yellow scrap of paper from his pocket and handing it to Pierre to read.

Gabrielle seized the snuffers and snuffed the candle, to increase the light. But Pierre could make nothing of the letter. It was so old and dim, and anyhow it is doubtful if Pierre could have read it if it had been newly written. He shook his head.

"What!" exclaimed the old man in surprise. "Can't read that? Why, every word is plain. I can see the letters standing right out on the paper."

It is probable that his imagination aided him much in this, for the letter was perfectly illegible to others.

"Well, I don't need to read it. I can tell you what's in it without that. I couldn't forget it if I tried. It

was written from one of the Southern States, and reads:

“‘BAPTISTE: I’m dying. The yellow fever is here, and they say I’ve got it. I don’t know if they’ll let this letter through the quarantine to reach you or not, but I must write it. I stole your little Bonaventure, because, Baptiste, I hated you. I hate you now, but I love Angelique. I love her as much as I did when you took her away from me years ago. For her sake I send you this. I took the boy to Montreal. Then I was afraid you’d find me, and I started west into Upper Canada. I traveled with him day and night for a time, getting more and more afraid that you’d follow me. One night I stopped with him at a country tavern, somewhere on what they called the Kingston Road. I left him there, telling the people I would go back for him next day; but I never went—I was afraid. I came quickly to this country, and here I am. I write you this before I die, so that, after all these years, there may be a slight chance that you can find him. This for Angelique. For her sake I hope you may succeed. As soon as I think of you, I hope you won’t.

LEON.’”

The letter, as might be expected, produced a wonderful effect on them all, but there was one individual especially who was more intensely agitated than the others at its close. This was Bonaventure. Gabrielle was astonished to see her father begin to catch for breath, and stare strangely at old Baptiste, while the letter was being interpreted by Pierre. He approached Pierre as soon as it was done, and with a face pale from excitement, he caught him by the arm and said, in a voice husky almost to a whisper:

"What did he say that little boy's name was in the letter?"

Pierre looked in astonishment at Bonaventure, and could not understand the terrible stress that seemed to suddenly come upon him. He had never seen Bonaventure act like this before. Neither had Gabrielle.

"Why," said Pierre, "you maght remamber. Sem name yours. He say dat name Bonaventure."

"For God's sake, Pierre, ask the old man how he'd know his little boy. Ask him if there was any mark or anything on him."

Pierre stared somewhat stupidly at Bonaventure a moment, unable to make out any just cause for such terrible excitement.

"Ask him, you fool!" suddenly exclaimed Gabrielle, who could not wait an instant.

Pierre began jabbering away to the old man—Gabrielle always brought him to his senses—and soon Baptiste started to answer. Bonaventure saw him put his hand around to his back as best he could, to indicate something that he was describing to Pierre, and suddenly he began to tremble more than ever.

"He say," said Pierre, "hees leetle boy got wan, two, tree—what you call 'em? Leetle—" he began to scratch his head to get the English word. "Wan, two, tree leetle *warts*—no, not dat. Ah—"

"Moles?" suggested Bonaventure, scarcely above his breath.

"Yaas—yaas. Dat's de ting. Tree leetle moles on de top of hees beck."

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Pierre, he's my father!"

"Your *w'at*? Your—"

"Yes, yes, Pierre, he's my father—that old man is my

father! Oh, Gabrielle, my child, my child," turning quickly to her and seizing her in his arms, "you've saved my poor old father, you've brought him home to me. Oh, *mon Dieu, mon Dieu!* what an hour is this!"

It may be imagined that the little group, who were by this time standing around in the center of the room, were deeply moved by the unexpected development. Old Baptiste sat staring queerly at them, unable to make out what it all meant.

"Tell him, Pierre," said Gabrielle, with the tears streaming down her cheeks. "Tell him. He'll be the happiest one of all to find it out."

Pierre's love of the theatrical came prominently to the surface at once. This was the most important interpretation he had yet been called upon to make, and he proposed that it should be done in a manner worthy its greatness. He struck a dramatic attitude, and pointing his finger at Bonaventure, proceeded very impressively with his information.

The others saw the old man watching him closely as he spoke, and presently he began to tremble, and sprang to his feet and stood among them, as deeply agitated as Bonaventure himself. But he could not at first quite grasp the full import of Pierre's remarks, and looking somewhat wildly and helplessly at the others, he asked Pierre something. Pierre again explained matters, and emphasized his remarks by placing his hand on Bonaventure's shoulder. Old Baptiste looked nervously at Bonaventure, apparently unable to believe that Pierre meant precisely what he said. The matter was so unexpected to him that it took him some time to collect his ideas. He still stood tracing Bonaventure's outlines up and down with his

eyes, and murmuring something to himself, in the same way he had done that first night when Gabrielle brought him home. Bonaventure watched intently each passing expression of the old man's countenance, as if he would interpret his every thought. It was a moment of terribly straining suspense to both. Bonaventure's eyes were glistening with tears. Old Baptiste was trembling as if palsied. Suddenly their eyes met, as if by an electric spark. It was only an instant, and they were in each others arms, the strong man who had been a little boy and the old man who had been so long lost to him.

There was no more of the old man's story told that night, except that when they were slightly calmer he was able to confirm the relationship by remembering that the letter contained a postscript which gave the name of the people who kept the tavern where Leon had left little Bonaventure. He had always read it "M. Glorrg" instead of McGlorrie, Leon having spelled it with a "y," which Baptiste had mistaken for a "g." He had supposed the "M" at the beginning was meant for "Monsieur," and had overlooked the small "c." But there was now no doubt that the name referred to was that of old Timothy McGlorrie.

When the matter was firmly settled in the minds of all present, old B'gob-sir expressed the sentiment of the party by saying:

"Well, now, b'gob-sir, if any one'd told me such a thing as that could happen, I'd 'a' said it was the biggest lie on top of this earth. It's worse than an ordinary lie. Nobody'd ever think up sech a thing as that to tell. Why, Prosper himself couldn't 'a' thought up anything as good as that if he'd 'a' been right in the midst of a

horse-trade. Anyhow, I want to tell you that things has turned out perty middlin' good, after all, even if Mrs. McGlorrie and me didn't want anybody to go traipsin' off after that wild—well, now, b'gob-sir, I jest can't bring myself to call this old feller a wild man any more," as he looked at old Baptiste in some confusion. Then suddenly remembering what a startling bit of news he had for the people at Jerry's tavern, he turned to Philander and said: "Well, I guess we'd better be movin' on down toward the village, and let these folks talk it over among themselves. I never could understand French very well, anyway, and I'll be busted if I can see how ever old Pabcleest, as they call him, can make out anything from that clack of Pierre's. It's worse'n the cackle of a hen. Come along, Philander; le's go down to Jerry's. Say, do you know," as they were starting out, "that last lot o' whisky—" But Philander considerately slammed the door and shut the old fellow's words out into the night.

XXVI.

THE STORY CONTINUED.

IT may be imagined that there was some curiosity on the part of those who had listened to the first part of Baptiste's story to hear the remainder; so on the next available evening they again came together at Bonaventure's, and the old man continued:

"Of course after getting Leon's letter I started to Upper Canada. I had little hope that I should find Bonaventure, it was so long since he had been stolen; and yet there was nothing to do but make the attempt. I traveled the Kingston Road—every foot of it—inquiring all along for a man by the name of Monsieur Glorrg. Of course I didn't find him. I gave it up, heart-broken. What was there for me to do? Where should I go? It was impossible to go back to Sorel—that would kill me. I wanted to go insane, but a man can't do that when he wants to. All the same, I could get away from my fellow-man, and that was something. I could live by myself among the trees, and hear them moan and sing in the wind. The trees didn't steal little boys, and even when they fell and died, they didn't say the things that Angelique said to me when she was dying. I would go and stay among the trees. Maybe I *was* insane, after all. I don't know. I started north from the Kingston Road in search of the roughest, wildest spot I could find. I had a long walk before I reached a place wild enough; but at last I succeeded. You know where

that is. I found a cave and slept in it, and I was happier that first night in the cave than I had been ever since Angelique died. There was no human being to see me, no one who might prove false. That made me happy. Maybe I *was* insane, though. I can't tell. All the same I must get something to eat in the morning. I had an old musket with me, and I shot a duck on the little creek below the cave; but the noise of the gun made me think too much of human beings. It jarred on me to hear any sound like that made by man. After this I never shot the old musket unless I was driven to it by hunger or fear. I lived on berries at first—it was in the early fall—and then the nuts began to get ripe. I gathered large quantities and stored them in the cave. A big storm came up that first fall, the worst I had ever seen. It was awful, that storm, and lying in my cave I thought surely the last day had come. I think I was glad that it had—I might see Angelique. But by morning it was clear and bright. When I came out of the cave, I looked down toward the creek and saw that the wind had blown a forked cedar tree against a tall pine. It was fortunate for me that it did, for I used that forked cedar a great many times after that. The way I came to use it was this: One day—it may have been years after this, or it may have been only weeks, for I had little realization of time—I was gathering nuts, and placing them in a heap by the mouth of the cave. I had gone away after a fresh lot, and came running back with my load—I think I must have run most of the time in those days—when suddenly, on rounding a clump of bushes near the cave, I encountered an immense black thing that frightened me nearly into spasms. I turned and fled, flinging my

nuts as I ran. I was now in a dilemma. I dare not go near the cave for fear of this huge animal, and there was no way that I could tell when it left the cave. Suddenly I thought of the forked cedar, and I ran to it and climbed up till I reached the pine. I was hidden from view by the pine, and yet I could peep around it and see the mouth of the cave. I found it was a big bear, and that he was munching away at my heap of nuts. I remained up the tree till I saw him leave, and then I hastened to the cave and drew the flat stone I had secured as a covering over the mouth. I lay there in the cave till absolutely driven out by thirst. I was afraid to approach the cave after that for fear of encountering the bear. It was so situated that I could not see it till I was right at the spot, and so I always made it a practice to first run down to the cedar and climb up to look around. The bear came many times after that in the hope of finding more nuts, and one day I had to remain up the cedar till nearly night before he went away from the neighborhood. My great desire now was to kill this bear if I could. I should never be safe while he was prowling around, and anyhow I wanted his skin. But how to do it, that was the thing. I was afraid to trust a shot with the old musket, for I had no faith that it would kill him. If it simply injured him he would kill me; and however little I cared about living I couldn't bear the idea of being torn to pieces by an animal. I almost gave it up, but he began coming so often that something must be done. So one day I loaded the musket with a very heavy charge—it was about the last ammunition I had—and set it by the cave in some bushes, with a string made from the bark of a tree tied to the trigger, and leading to a twig lying on

the ground with some hazel-nuts on it. I waited patiently hour after hour up the cedar, but he did not come that day. I set it again the next day, and toward night he came. He went rummaging around, and finally saw the twig of hazel-nuts. He put his paw on the twig and pulled off one of the nuts, and munched away at it as contentedly as possible. I was afraid he was not going to explode the musket, but presently he seized the twig in his teeth and began shaking it vigorously. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion, and I saw him leap to his hind legs and savagely beat the air with his fore feet, growling all the while most terribly. He tore around among the bushes in a fearful rage, and I was unable to tell whether he was badly injured or not. He got out of my sight in a short time, and I heard him scrambling off among the bushes, making a noise that terrified me. I hurried to the cave and shut myself up, for I knew I was safe there. A bear of his size never could get through the opening. The next day I came out after some water, and as I was going down to the creek, listening every step I took for the slightest sound, I suddenly came upon his dead body. I was frightened of him even when dead, but I managed to skin him, and his hide helped to keep me warm for many a day and night.

"But I can't tell you all of the things that happened to me in the woods, for I don't know myself. This adventure with the bear was the last really connected thing I can recount. I must have lost my mind part of the time, for most of the period that I was in the woods seems like a disjointed dream. I lived like an animal among the animals, only there was no other animal of my kind there. I can not say that time hung heavily

with me, for I had no object, no aim, no association to look forward to; and yet I often found myself carving figures on the wall of my cave, without ever remembering picking up the stone that I carved them with. I think I must have mechanically done this carving on account of having nothing else to do. I ate because my stomach pained me if I failed to eat. I don't know whether I slept much or not, but I think I must have dreamed sometimes, though there was little distinction that I can see between my dreams in my sleep and my waking dreams. In all my dreams, sleeping or waking, I was constantly disturbed by visions of little Bonaventure and poor dear Angelique. I would sit sometimes looking at a certain tree, and if I looked steadily at it very long it would presently turn into Angelique, and the limbs would reach out to me as if they were her arms and were trying to embrace me; and when I tried to get hold of them they were always too far away for me—I never could touch them. I would reach, and reach, and reach, but something always seemed to keep her arms just outside of my touch. It was awful. If I tried for a long time to reach Angelique's arms—and I always must try, they were so appealing to me—the tree would presently begin to dance around and the arms make motions at me and wave through the air, and then the other trees would start until there were dozens of Angeliques and hundreds of arms, all dancing around me and driving me distracted. Then they would begin to jeer at me, and tantalize me, and exasperate me into a foaming rage; and when I could stand it no longer I would rush off to the cave and shut myself up in utter darkness. When I came out again there would be nothing but trees

there—no Angeliques; and then I would be disappointed, for I would rather see Angelique, even if I couldn't reach her arms. At other times the birds in the trees would turn into little Bonaventures, and I would hurry after them and chase them for hours—I did want my little Bonaventure so much; but I never could catch them, and I never could let them alone either, till I had gone into the cave, where it was dark and I couldn't see them.

"I must have lived in the woods a long time without ever seeing a human being, for at last when I did see one I was terribly frightened. I would sooner have met an animal than a man; but I kept encountering one now and then, and I think I must have seen people oftentimes when they didn't see me. I always got out of their way as fast as I could. One day I saw three men at my cave as I climbed the cedar—I had formed this habit of climbing the cedar, and always did it even after the bear was dead—and after that I was more frightened than ever. I came near moving away from the cave, but sheer force of habit kept me there. Then another time as I was lying in the cave I heard voices outside, and presently the stone was drawn aside, and I heard Angelique scream and run away. I thought at first it must be the trees mocking me again, but the sound was not the same, and then the stone was lifted away. I didn't know what to think after that; but one day when I went up the cedar I found some bread lying there. I knew that must be from Angelique, for I had tasted nothing like that for so long. Then I began watching for Angelique, and one day I saw her climbing up the cedar, and then I knew it was her, for it looked just like the real Angelique. It was different

from the ones I had seen among the trees; and yet I was afraid to run toward her at once, for fear she'd get away from me again. I wanted Angelique to stay with me; but she left me, and I went back to the cave, and thought it must be the Angelique of the trees, after all. And yet the bread she gave me—the trees had never done that—and this looked like the real Angelique. I watched for her to come again, because I wanted to see her, and I wanted to eat. She came again and again, and each time I felt worse at seeing her go, till at last I followed her. But when she led me where I could see other people, I ran back to the cave. I didn't want other people; I wanted Angelique. But it was awful to go back to the cave after seeing Angelique and hearing her speak, even though she didn't speak as she used to and I couldn't understand her. I knew her voice so well that at last I must follow her—I couldn't leave her; and one night she brought me here, and—and—I guess you all know Angelique," looking at Gabrielle, who instantly rushed weeping to his embrace.

He petted her and smoothed down her hair, much as he had done that day in the woods when he had so terribly frightened her.

"Yes, Bonaventure, my son," said the old man, tenderly pressing Gabrielle to his breast, "she is the image of your dead mother. I have found my Angelique, and my little Bonaventure."

When Pierre had interpreted this to Bonaventure the great-hearted soul overflowed, and the man wept like a child. He had been intensely impressed, as indeed had all the others, over his father's pathetic story, and now the pent-up feelings of years must have vent in some way.

When Gabrielle saw her father sobbing, she sprang from old Baptiste's knee and leaped with her usual impulsive, heart-beating energy into his arms. The situation was not without its embarrassment for the visitors present. Donald's inward reflection was that he wished he might be able to sob like Bonaventure, so that Gabrielle should treat him in the same way. Philander said to himself that he felt a little out of place there, but they were the best folks on top of this earth, and he was glad they were all so happy. B'gob-sir—well, he never thought anything to himself that he did not immediately think out loud, and this was no exception.

"Philander, plain to be seen we ain't no use here. Can't do a blame bit o' good, 'cause the good's already done—and—and I'm tickled over it, I can tell you. If you can figger up anything better'n has happened here, I'd like to see the figgers and add 'em up. What say you, Philander, hadn't we better mosey?"

Philander assented, and after bidding all good-night, the two started toward the village.

"Say, Philander," remarked B'gob-sir, after they had walked some time in silence, "do you know I come gosh-blamed nigh blubberin' there to-night? I *did* blubber—ain't a-goin' to deny it. I blubbered right along half the time, and I ain't 'shamed of it, gosh-blame it. What'd a feller be made of if he didn't? I want to tell you, Philander," he continued, more impressively, "that hull affair makes a man think there's a God in heaven, after all, even if such a whelp as Prosper Tryne does do his best to disgrace him on earth. What say you, Philander?"

"Shouldn't wonder," said Philander, after a pause, with perhaps more meaning than the words would seem to imply.

XXVII.

CONCLUSION.

SPRING had come around the Nonquon, with all its softening, mellowing influence. The snow had slowly stolen away, and swelled the creeks, and rivers, and lakes. The few patches that remained in the fence-corners, where the drifts had been high, were black and scummed over with the refuse of a winter. The roads were muddy, the air humid, and humanity lazy. The shantymen had nearly all gone, leaving only one incident of interest marking their departure. This was a serious matter concerning Pierre.

Poor Pierre had lost his wife. Not from death, by any means, but in the manner predicted by one of the shantymen on a previous occasion. Mrs. Dufresne had run away—possibly to escape the terrible alternative of not having enough work to do when the shantymen were gone. The fact that lent color to this theory was that she had gone about the same time as one of the shantymen for whom she used to do a great deal of washing. The few that were left condoled with Pierre. They said it was too bad.

“And then,” remarked one of them, warningly, “no tellin’ what trouble she’ll git you into. She’s your lawful wife, and she could go to all the stores and buy things and git trusted, and you’d have to pay for ’em.”

“Wass dat?” demanded Pierre, excitedly. “You say—”

"Yes, sir; I say she can run you in debt all over if she likes, and I'll bet she likes, sure enough. That's the kind of a woman she is."

Pierre was in a terrible dilemma. He stood with his eyes cast ruefully on the ground in front of him, and his hands pushed deeply into his trousers pockets. He slowly shook his head from side to side, revolving the thing in his mind. The fellow probably had not a dollar in his pocket, and his credit was no good in any store in Canada, but it was all the same to Pierre. He fancied, as he stood there, that he was a very responsible personage, and that the prospects were good for him to be financially ruined.

"Tell you what you can do, Pierre," said the shanty-man, wishing to push the joke further. "You can go to the stores around and warn 'em."

"Wass dat you say?" Wharn 'em?"

"Yes, warn 'em." And he proceeded to give Pierre the technical process necessary. He recited to him the set phrase used in such cases, and Pierre started forthwith with an impressive mien in the direction of the village store. Prosper was not in, so he walked up to Mrs. Tryne, who stood behind the counter, and in a very serious and dramatic manner began:

"My name, das Pierre Dufresne. Dat's my waf's name *too*. My waf, she leave my house—she no ax me. Af any man trus' my waf on my name, by golly, das los' for *you*!" And leaving the bewildered Mrs. Tryne staring at him, he stalked out with the air of a man who had just had his prospects in life seriously jeopardized by the depravity of others, but who, through a remarkable degree of sagacity and decision, had thwarted their base designs.

Many springs have come and gone around the Non-quon since then. Some changes have taken place, but few of any moment. The railroad has spoiled the business of the country tavern, and not many of the old ones remain. There is a new store-keeper, a younger and a better man than the one who traded a blind horse to the drunken farmer. The greatest change, and probably the one most to be regretted, is in the name of the village. Not content with the suggestive Indian title that had marked the place since the early days when the red man first put his foot upon it, the modern inhabitants petitioned the post office authorities at Ottawa to give them a new word more to their liking. They had selected the name of Seagrove for their village, and sent it on for approval. Through some mistake of the authorities the word was changed to Seagrave. It was so registered, and so it remains—a fitting rebuke upon the inhabitants for meddling.

Some shifting scenes have passed that throw us into reverie. Old Baptiste lived the rest of his days in serenity, and died in the arms of his "little Bonaventure."

One day in May following the old man's rescue there was a wedding at Bonaventure's—with two happy hearts, and—two mothers-in-law. The bride brought them together, and made them promise to be friends. No one could resist that bride, for she was so tender, tremulous, and tearful. So the old folks forgot about the turnips.

Another scene, a few years later. The shades of evening are falling fast, as we are passing a house quite modern on the old McFarlane homestead. The blinds are always up in this house, so to-night we feel

privileged to pause and look in. We see by the light inside a man sitting in front of the open fire-place with something on his knee. A form is moving about the room, passing now and then between us and the lamp on the table. It is a familiar form—one we saw years ago in a canoe among the logs on the Nonquon Creek. We see her stoop and pick up something in her arms. It is a little boy, a noble little fellow in his small white night-robe. She places him on the father's other knee, and now we see that what he held before was a baby girl, a tiny tot of two. They clamber about his neck and kiss him good-night, and then jump down and scamper after the mother, who has taken the lamp from the table and opened the door to another room. We see two little bobbing heads trotting along. The light changes from one window to another, and we look again and see the white forms lifted into a small cot by the larger bed. We see the mother stooping above them, and tucking the clothing snugly about their little shoulders and under their little feet. And then we see—divinest sight of all—we see the mother bending over her precious babes, and printing on their lips a mother's good-night kiss, the sweetest passport to the "beautiful land of nod."

THE END.

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